

THE
ANGELS W

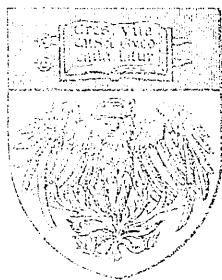
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THE
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BY
EDDY

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THE

ANGELS' WHISPERS;

ECHOES OF SPIRIT VOICES

DESIGNED TO CONSOLE THE MOURNING

Husband and Wife,
Father and Mother,
Son and Daughter,
Brother and Sister.

BY DANIEL C. EDDY, D.D.,

"

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there.
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair."

NEW EDITION.

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P R E F A C E.

THE object of this little volume is to give comfort to the mourner. The author has long felt the need of some book which treats upon specific cases of affliction, to put into the hands of those whose friends have been taken from them; and he has gathered a number of addresses made on funeral occasions, taken away the pulpit style, interspersed them with appeals to the heart and conscience of the reader, and bound them together under the title, selected by the publisher, of "Angel Whispers."

His desire is, that the book may prove a source of comfort to those who have been called, in the providence of God, to weep over blasted hopes, and ruined expectations, and lead them away to the everlasting source

of consolation and hope. If it does succeed in the accomplishment of this, he will feel that his labor has not been in vain.

May the God of the mourner bless to the torn and distracted heart these plain and simple instructions, and make them efficacious in drying the widow's tears, and imparting joy to the heart of the orphan.

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ANGEL WHISPERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE VICTORY OF FAITH.

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Paul.*

WHAT is death? is a question which thousands have asked, but to which no satisfactory answer has yet been given. Though death's dark empire extends through all time and over all lands — though we see his work performed every day we live, there is yet a mystery over the grave which no human being can solve, clouds which none on earth can dispel. The physician can converse intelligibly as to the action of the blood and nerves, the action of the heart and lungs, and explain to you the physical phenomenon of death. The theologian can lead you beyond the grave, show you the connection between this world and the next, and dissipate all fears which have harrowed up the soul;

but neither the physician of the body or the mind can lift the vail which hangs over the tomb, or drive away entirely the mists which descend and rest upon the passage between this our world and the land of shades. The fear of death arises, to some extent, from a natural instinct which is implanted by God in the bosom of every living thing. The conscious man looks upon the grave with a shudder; the soulless beast shrinks from death, as if he were endowed with mind and reason; and the unconscious member of the vegetable kingdom naturally resists that which will wither its bloom and destroy its verdure. From man, made in the image of his God, down through all that has life or progress, there seems to be a shrinking back from death.

From whence does this arise? Surely not from the physical distress of dying. It is the universal testimony of all who have a right to speak on this subject, that the pains of dying are generally few. More is often suffered in a moment in life, than from all the pangs of death. Long years ago, before the science of medicine was understood, some men considered it a mercy to hasten the end of those who were deemed incurable; and various modes were resorted to, to procure speedy dissolution. Parents stifled their children, and children their parents, with much charity, as they supposed,

to end their sufferings. Scarcely a century ago, in France and England, persons afflicted with hydrophobia were hastened out of the world, that their sufferings might be shortened.

But we have every reason to suppose that no idea could be more erroneous, nor any custom more absurd and cruel. What appear to us to be the contortions of physical anguish, are frequently merely the effects of disease upon the body, the pains of which do not reach the soul. Montaigne mentions an instance of death which came under his own observation. The body of his friend was writhing in apparent agony; cold perspiration ran down the cheek, and the dying man gave all the usual evidences of the most terrible anguish. His friends aroused him, and entreated him to hear their voices. He roused, and exclaimed, "Who is it that torments me thus? Why was I snatched from my deep and pleasant repose? Oh! why do you thus deprive me of needed rest?"

Men know that death, in its physical anguish, does not equal the pains which they suffer in life, and which often arise from the most trivial causes. The exposure of a nerve in a decayed tooth, the breaking of a limb, if we can believe the testimony of the dying, has often more anguish than the last struggle itself. Hence we must look to some other source for an explanation of the universal horror

of dying. We think the words of Paul, which stand at the head of this article, will explain the secret :

The sting of death is sin.

Whether death would ever have been in our world, had sin not entered first, we scarcely know. We can hardly conceive of any arrangement by which bodies such as we have now could be kept in this world forever. And yet we know not how much they were changed by the fall of our first parents. They might have been imperishable once, but changed and corrupted in consequence of transgression. The body of Christ is now on high ; it waits for the last judgment ; it has been incorruptible eighteen hundred years, and it may remain the same eighteen hundred years to come. It is possible, and perhaps probable, that the body of the first Adam was like that now worn by the second Adam, as the result of his splendid victory over death and the grave. If so, it might have continued here until the present hour, and Adam might have held communion with all his children.

But whether this would have been the case or not, has been concealed from us. It is a thing not essential to our present happiness, and is one of the points which we shall dwell upon, and understand hereafter. But of another fact we are certain. While God has left us in ignorance of what would

have become of the body, whether it would have remained here, or been removed in some other way to heaven, we are not left in ignorance of the fact, that death, in its present dreadful forms, was introduced into the world by sin, and that sin gives to it its sting, and its terror, and its dreadful dominion. Were there no sin, there would be no fear of dissolution. If death was the appointed passage from earth to heaven, from terrestrial to celestial life, man would lie down and die as calmly as he retires to sleep; he would enter the grave with as much composure as he now enters his own dwelling, shutting the door behind him.

Whatever physical suffering death brings with it, whatever pains and pangs it ministers to its victims, whatever fears of mind and dread of a future state it yields, may all be set down to the account of sin. When you see your friend in anguish—when you witness the contortions of his body, and hear him tell you of the awful foreboding that all will not be well beyond the grave, you may say, “O sin, this is thy work!” When you see the hearse rolling along to the sepulcher, to deposit its burden there—when you see whole families arrayed in mourning, and whole communities stricken with grief, you can say, “O sin, thou hast done this!” When you hear from the bloodless lips, and the cold grave, and the veiled mourner, and the flood

or tears over buried affection, the solemn sentence, "Man goeth to his long home, and his mourners go about the streets," you may say, "O sin, this ruin thou hast made!"

How often does the parent blame God for the removal of his child! how often does the husband murmur at God because his wife is removed! how often is He, the sinless One, made the cause of the heavy woes which roll over our way! How often does the dying sinner curse his Maker for those frightful visions of future retribution which throng around him and flit before him! But why blame God? why complain of the Almighty? Sin has done it; sin is doing it; sin will continue to do it. God did, indeed, take your child, your wife, your friend, but sin made it necessary; and every pang which wrung the heart, and every sorrow which swept through the soul, was the result of sin. Blame that, curse that, hate that.

But we further learn that

The strength of sin is the law.

Where there is no law, sin is not imputed. Had God given no law to man, he had not known sin. Sin is indeed sin, wherever it is committed. A lie is a lie; theft is theft; murder is murder, by whoever done. The maniac, the idiot, the child, may lie and steal; but to their offense there will

be no *strength*. There is no sense of wrong. God nor man will hold these persons responsible. They are not responsible persons. But let the idiot be gifted with mind, the maniac restored to reason, the child grow up to manhood, and the law comes in, they are now responsible, and cannot do the same sins without fearful guilt. The law is of various kinds. The written law, the law in every man's own conscience, and the universal conviction as to right and wrong. We have the law on paper; the heathen have the law written, more imperfectly indeed, on the heart. Each one is a law unto himself, his conscience accusing or excusing him. This law gives sin its terrible strength, alters the very character of our transgressions, and places us in a new attitude before God. Sin was in the world before the law came, but man was not charged with it, because his mind was not informed, his judgment was not enlightened, and his conscience was not alive. There was a time when there was in the world no law against polygamy. It was as much wrong then as it is now, but the offense was of no force, because the law had not forbidden it. But when the law came, the arrangement of society which had appeared to be a virtue was seen to be a vice, and none could commit it without great guilt. "The days of this ignorance God winked at," as a scripture writer expresses it, "but now commandeth all men

everywhere to repent." Hence we can see the reason why men dread the dying hour, and put it as far off as possible. They have had a law, and broken it. They are about to enter into the presence of the Being who made the law, and pass a severe trial. The law is to be applied to them, and they are to stand its test. The sinner knows he cannot do it. He feels his inability to meet its violated and insulted claims. He is the criminal conducted by death down through a passage, long, dark, damp, and dismal, into the court-room of the universe, where, before an assembled world, he is to be tried. The sting of every criminal's sorrow is his crime; the strength of his crime is the sacredness of the law he has broken. Arrest and imprisonment have no sting, if there be no crime. There was no sting to the confinement of Bunyan in Bedford jail; there was no sting to the confinement of John on the island of Patmos; nor was there any sting to Bunyan's death on Snow Hill, or to the decease of John amid the disciples at Ephesus.

The clearer view a man has of the law, the keener will be his anguish when he dies. The more intimately he has been made acquainted with what God requires of him, the more he will shrink from an investigation of his course. Hence the man who has been brought up under all the blaze

of Gospel light, who has had Christian parents and religious influences, will often feel the most alarm when he lies upon the bed of death. He feels then that his little sins are of more consequence and of deeper guilt, than the robberies and murders of men who have had no light, and have been surrounded by no Gospel privileges. The law—the law—gives a terrible strength to all his fears, and he enters the cold grave with shivering limbs and a trembling heart. But for that law, written in the Gospel, inscribed on his heart, and repeated every day of his life, he might die in peace; but now there is a sting to sin, and the strength of that sin is the law which he has broken.

But the Gospel makes a glorious announcement, viz., *a victory over sin and death is gained.*

“Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The victory gained by the Christian over death and sin is most decisive. To secure this great end was one great purpose of the Saviour’s advent. The sentence of death was pronounced upon man, as a consequence of his transgressions. It came as the result of his free, voluntary disobedience to a divine law; it came as an enemy, as a terrible agent, to work out the punishment due to sin. It was called, and understood to be, the king of terrors, and in this terrible aspect appeared to all its victims.

The object of Christ's coming was to change the relations between death and man, to remove its terrors, and make the future world yield a prospect of happiness and pleasure. This He did first, by pouring light upon the grave and upon the future state. Before He came, all was dark and dismal. The disciples of the old philosophers could learn nothing from their teachers on the subject. Between the wisest men and the future state a thick veil was drawn, and the glories of the one were concealed from the blinded vision of the other. But Christ astonished the world by the announcement of a future life, removed the blank uncertainty which was around death, and arrayed eternity in new forms of beauty and attractiveness.

But there is another view in which Christ achieved a victory over death, and thus enabled us to share His conquest, and become the partakers of His triumph. By His own death He brought death itself into subjection, changed it from a tyrant to a servant, and now lives to give all His people deliverance from its dangers. There is no view in which death may be looked upon by the disciple of Christ as a terror. Faith in Christ, as a vicarious atonement, entitles us to all the benefits of His crucifixion, in which is included a complete and everlasting victory over death and the grave. As the believer approaches the tomb, he finds a thousand lights glowing

in its once dark abodes ; when he meets with death, he finds that the monster's sting has been removed, and he who was once the king of terrors has become the boatman of the Lord to bear His children across the dark and rapid river, which divides us from our joyful inheritance. Sin was once the sting of death, but sin has been washed out and blotted away. The strength of sin once was the law, but now the law finds in Christ a perfect obedience, and appropriates His merits to all who live in Him. Hence Paul asks, with rapture, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The one was torn out; the other was changed to defeat. But for the death of Christ, not one star would shine upon the tomb; not one hope would cheer the dying; not one note of victory would fall upon the ear of the lost. But Christ having come, having entered into the grave, having tasted death for all men, those who believe in Him will conquer though they die, and triumph even when they fall. Corresponding with this is the dying testimony of believers in all ages and climes. The cultivated Europeans, and the ignorant and unlettered Hindoos, have been cheered in the last hours by the same faith. Sinners out of Christ have found the grave as deep and dark, the form of death as terrible, as ever; believers in Christ have found the grave a resting-place, and death their kindest

friend. They have gone down into the tomb, saying, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." They do not die: they only sleep.

"They cannot die, whose spirits here
Were one with Christ, their living head—
They cannot die,
Though the time-wasted sepulchre,
In which their vestiges are laid,
Crumbling in dust may lie.

"They are not dead, whose ashes fill
The melancholy house of clay—
They are not dead;
They live in brighter glory still,
Than ever cheered their earthly way,
Full beaming round their head."

But yesterday I read the thrilling description of the death of a young disciple, who, trusting in Christ, went as calmly down into the grave as to her bed at night, and gained, through Jesus, a nobler conquest than ever history recorded for the proudest of earthly warriors. To her, death was a valley, not of tears, but of life, light, and glory, and she walked on without fear. Such a death-scene has more true dignity and grandeur than the demise of kings and emperors. 'Twas thus described :

“About her chamber glided gently the loved forms of her parents, and only sister. She silently noted their movements with a mild expression of her dying eye, turning it from side to side. Arrested by her peculiar look, so expressive of affliction and patient suffering, they paused to look upon her, whom they only saw now but dimly through their tears, and so soon should see no more.

“A feeble effort to speak, a quivering, voiceless movement of the lips, drew closely around her the loving hearts of that sorrowing circle. Mother, father, sister, all came closer to her side. A playful smile lit up her countenance. She laid her little pulseless hand within her mother’s palm, then closed her eyelids to the light of earth, and sank away. The cold, damp air of death’s shadowy valley seemed circling over her. Slowly sinking down, she glided toward that river’s shore, which, like a narrow stream, divides the spirit-land from ours. But see! the quivering lips essay to speak! ‘Mother!’ O how each heart throbbed now, and then each pulse stood still. They listen. ‘Mother!’ the dying girl breathes forth, ‘I—see—a light—I’m almost home!’”

And now her home is in the region of light. She walks in white, she dwells with pure spirits, and her resting-place is with infinite holiness.

Another, who was near death—aye, in the very

swellings of the tumultuous Jordan—was seen to whisper. Kind friends hovered o'er the dying form, and listened. No murmur, no complaint, they heard, but a sweet and simple lay, breathed out from dying lips :

“My Saviour, be thou near me
Through life's night;
I cry, and thou wilt hear me:
Be my light.
My dim sight aching,
Gently thou'rt making
Meet for awaking,
Where all is bright.

“Through time's swelling ocean
Be my guide;
From tempests' wild commotion
Hide! oh, hide!
Life's crystal river
Storms ruffle never;
Anchor me ever
On that calm tide.”

Does it occur to us that we all must die, and go to our long home? Death will come to us as a kind friend, or as a terrible enemy. If he sees on our brow the mark of the Lord Jesus, his master, he will do our bidding, nor treat us harshly. If

he does not behold that mark, he will be, indeed, the king of terrors, to hurry us down into his dark dominions, along avenues which, though often explored, are never lighted by divine grace.

The death-dirge of the German poet, written for himself, in view of his own voyage over a fathomless sea, is now, or will be soon, our dirge and lament :

“By the shore of time now lying,
On the inky flood beneath,
Patiently, thou SOUL undying,
Waits for thee the Ship of Death !

“He who on that vessel starteth,
Sailing from the sons of men,
To the friends from whom he parteth,
Never more returns again !

“From her mast no flag is flying,
To denote from whence she came ;
She is known unto the dying—
AZAEL is her captain's name.

“Not a word was ever spoken
On that dark, unfathom'd sea :
Silence there is so unbroken,
She herself seems not to be

“Silent thus, in darkness lonely,
Doth the SOUL put forth alone,
While the wings of angels only
Waft her to a LAND UNKNOWN.”

O death ! soon for me thou wilt call—soon from the shores of the living my spirit shall be summoned into the world unknown ; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but to all them also who love His appearing.

CHAPTER II.

DEATH OF A BROTHER.

Thy brother shall rise again. *Jesus.*

IN the beautiful life of Jesus, recorded by four inspired men, are many sweet and tender scenes, in which goodness clothed in flesh is seen ministering at the couch of frailty and depravity, or mourning over the sorrows of bereavement and gloom. To the mothers and daughters of Judea, Christ was indeed an angel of mercy, moving from dwelling to dwelling, and from city to city, with the sole purpose of binding up broken hearts, wiping away flowing tears, and bringing gladness to the afflicted and distressed. While the rich, the honored, and the prosperous refused to receive Him, the poor and desolate welcomed Him to their homes, and carried His image on their hearts.

The case now presented to our minds by the single sentence which stands at the head of this article, is an affecting instance of sympathy for human suffering, and power in relieving it.

In the town of Bethany lived two sisters, who

ministered to the wants of an only brother. Their parents were dead, and they lived in the memory of the past, unblest by the riches and honors of the present. But while denied some of the luxuries and comforts of wealth, they had the joys of simple innocence and Christian love. They had heard the preaching of the Nazarine, had become His disciples, and had often entertained Him at their scanty board. Their house was open for his friends, and to all the disciples at Jerusalem brother Lazarus was known as one who loved the saints, and who ministered to their wants. But he became sick. The hand of disease was laid upon him, his joys withered, and his cheerfulness fled. The first thought of the sisters was to send for Jesus. A messenger was dispatched to say to the Saviour, "Him whom thou lovest is sick." On receiving this intelligence the Lord exhibited no anxiety or alarm. He attended to other matters as usual, and at the end of two days called His disciples to accompany Him on His journey, at the same time informing them that Lazarus was dead. On the reception of this news, one said one thing and one another; and Thomas, more impulsive than the rest, in his love of his departed friend, said, "Let us also go that we may die with him." Their journey commenced. With weeping eyes and sorrowing hearts they entered the town of Bethany, and

met Martha coming out to meet them. As soon as she saw Christ, she said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." The reply of Jesus was calm and firm, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha did not understand Him, and supposed He referred to the resurrection of the great day. Jesus seized the occasion to impress the minds of those around Him with a great doctrinal truth. From the present sorrow He carried them on to the general resurrection, and declared *himself* to be the resurrection and life, and presented himself as the way by which the dead might live, and the living never die. When He had finished His discourse He moved on to the tomb, followed by the two sisters, the disciples, and a large company of the people of Bethany. As He went, "Jesus wept," and when He arrived at the grave He freely mingled His tears with theirs. His human nature, as weak and frail as others, gave way to grief, and with groans and tears bowed himself before the sepulcher. The Jews who were around were affected by His grief. They saw how sincere it was, and said one to another, "Behold how He loved him!" After having wept awhile, He arose and wiped His tears away, and commanded that the stone should be rolled away from the door of the cave in which Lazarus was sleeping. Martha, as yet uninformed as to the Saviour's purpose, remonstrated, and de-

clared that decomposition and decay had already commenced. But Christ still persisted. His countenance, which a moment since was full of sadness and bathed in tears, was now beaming with heavenly confidence. The man had disappeared and the God stood before the tomb. The stone was taken away, and after breathing a short prayer to heaven, the Saviour cried, "Lazarus, come forth." A single moment, and deep and awful stillness hung over that little company, and but for a moment. A rustling was heard within, and out came the grave-bound man, and fell weeping into the arms of his sisters. In this miracle of Christ we find love and power, humanity and divinity, strangely and beautifully blended together. In all the former part of the scene Christ appears as a man, having human weakness and infirmity, and bowing under the weight of human sympathy and sorrow. The death of His friend seems to have made all the impression upon Him that it would have made upon one of us. He wept as freely, He loved as fondly, He sorrowed as deeply as could we on a similar occasion, and all around were mourning as much on His account as on account of Lazarus. The *man* Jesus pervades the scene; the *man* is in the foreground; the *man* draws all attention and fixes all observation. But soon he rises. His tears are gone. His sorrow-stricken countenance assumes

an expression of joy and hope. New splendors beam around his head. He seems changing from weakness to strength, from sorrow to bliss, from man to God. All around mark the change and bow their heads, and while they thus remain the order is given, and the dead man, obeying the voice of his master, comes out of his tomb. Here is God as plainly seen as was the man but a moment before; God conquering death, overcoming the grave, and gaining a victory for His friend and follower.

Who has not lost a *brother*, endeared to us by the ties of nature, marriage, or affection? Who has not been called to bury some beloved form, over whom we have said with Thomas, "Let us also go that we may die with him?" What heart has not been torn by having the bands of nature broken? To that heart comes the joyful intelligence, "Thy brother shall arise again." The grave will not always hold him. Was he Christ's? Did he die with faith in Christ? Then he will rise; he will leave his tenement of dust; he will come out to meet his weeping sisters and his mourning friends.

If you ask, "*when* will he rise?" I reply, not now. It is better that he should not be recalled to life. No miracle will He put forth to bring him back to earth before his time. It is God's will that his dust should mingle with its kindred dust, be swept, scattered, and dissolved. But on the

morning of the resurrection he will rise again. This corruptible must put on incorruption; this mortal must be arrayed in immortality. The resurrection of Christ is the pledge and proof of our resurrection. If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain. But now Christ *has* risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept, for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. In view of such a doctrine, it is not surprising that the apostle should launch out into such vehement declarations of victory over death, and conquest over the grave. He knew that no grave could hold him long, no worms consume him entirely, no shroud forever wind his body. He heard by faith the voice of Christ saying to all believers, "Come forth," and in that great and miraculous invitation he was included. The monster death lay stingless at his feet; by faith he rises a victor over the tomb. The same hope remains to every child of God. The same precious consolation is reserved for every one who has lost a pious friend.

"I can repine at death no more,

But with a cheerful gasp resign

To the cold dungeon of the grave,

These dying, withering limbs of mine.

“Let worms devour my wasting flesh,
And crumble all my bones to dust;
My God shall raise my frame anew,
At the revival of the just.

“Break, sacred morning, through the skies,
Bring that delightful, dreadful day;
Cut short the hours, dear Lord, and come,
Thy lingering wheels, how long they stay.

“Our weary spirits faint to see
The light of thy returning face;
And hear the language of those lips,
Where God has shed His richest grace.

“Haste, then, upon the wings of love,
Rouse all the pious sleeping clay;
That we may join in heavenly joys,
And sing the triumph of the day.”

If you ask, *Where* thy brother shall rise? I reply, The spot whereon he fell. The scene of his death and burial is to be the scene of his resurrection. The sod on which you have stood and wept, in which you have set sweet flowers, and to which you have loved to repair, will be the spot on which his ransomed feet will stand to wait the crown of glory which will circle his no longer wasted brow. Skepticism will declare this impossible, and assure you that the earth is not large enough to hold all

who have in successive generations gone down to the grave ! But science declares that but a small part of the earth will be needed for this terrible display, and a late writer has shown by a mathematical calculation that every objection arising from this source is completely unsound. Skepticism will tell you that the dust of the body cannot be recollected, that it enters into the composition of other bodies, and is lost ; but faith takes up the argument and shows that the same power which first made man out of dust can keep his scattered particles until they shall be needed at the last day. Skepticism ridicules the idea that the spirit will descend to reclaim its old tenement, and occupy its former flesh ; but reason asks, “ Hast thou forgotten that Lazarus, and the son of the widow of Nain, were called back again to assume their old habitations, the former after it had lain in the grave four days ;” and adds, “ What has been done, may be done again.”

How beautiful the thought, that when the trumpet sounds, the dead shall come forth from the spot whereon they fell. The sailor who found a watery grave will emerge from his long, deep resting-place ; the warrior who fell upon the battle-field will arise side by side with him who was slain by his own hand, their feuds all ended ; whole families will stand together on some green spot, which they have

purchased, inclosed, and adorned with care; brother and sister side by side will rise and lock their arms together, and long-parted bodies be reunited. The attention paid to our burial-places, the care bestowed upon them, and the love we have for the dead clay, after the spirit has ceased to animate it, are the strivings of this heaven-taught doctrine, and the very skeptic who denies it, obeys its silent teachings, and acts upon its noiseless requirements.

If you ask, *How* thy brother shall rise? I reply, He died with a corruptible body, he shall come forth from his grave with an incorruptible one; the same form, the same flesh, but changed, and purified, and blest, so that it may exist imperishably forever.

He died a sinner; he shall rise perfectly purified from sin, and prepared for endless being with his God. His old habits will be broken up, the desires of the flesh shall be subdued, and he shall come from his sepulcher with the last impression of guilt effaced, the last trace of imperfection blotted out, and "holiness to the Lord" written upon his heart. He entered the grave a sufferer. His very struggle with death was one of mortal pain. All life-long, tears were his meat, and his robes were woven of the tangled threads of bitterness. He shall rise free from suffering and pain. His tears were all shed on earth; his groans were all uttered here; his sorrows are ended with the last breath of mor-

tal life, and in his immortality he knows no anguish.

You saw your brother a man,

“By sin and suffering tried ;”

you saw him weep, you heard him groan ; but as you will behold him come forth from his tomb, all these traces will be gone. You loved him in his life ; you will love him more when he rises to the dignity of a pure and holy spirit. You admired his fair form and features, you thought him beautiful ; you will admire him more when angels have become his ministers, and the life of the skies and the youth of heaven have blushed upon his cheek, and mantled over a countenance unstained with sin.

If you ask for *what* purpose your brother will rise, I reply, He will be raised to be cleared from the legal connection he once held with the dark empire of sin ; to be pronounced innocent by Christ, who once bore his load, and to enter with a glorified assembly into the presence of God on high. He will rise to enjoy all that angels feel of celestial love and peace, to swell the anthem of heaven, the chorus of the Redeemer, which, beginning upon the outer ranks of the hosts of God, rolls inward, growing deeper and louder, until it gathers and breaks in one full, deep symphony of praise around the throne, “Worthy the Lamb, who was slain, to

receive honor, and power, and glory, and dominion, forever and ever !”

Viewed in this light, what a glorious idea the resurrection is ! How does it destroy the fear of death, and take away the dark appearances which gather around the grave ? As we look around, we see the work of death on every side. Rank after rank is falling on the battle-field of life, and the cold earth on which we tread is arched with graves. Men die, and leave long trains of weeping friends, until earth seems to be one vast burial-field, and our race made up of the dead and the dying only.

“The dead are everywhere !

The mountain-side, the plain, the wood profound,
All the wide earth, the fertile and the fair,
Is one vast burial-ground !

“Within the populous street,

In solitary homes, in places high,
In pleasure-domes, where pomp and luxury meet,
Men bow themselves to die.

“The old man at his door,

The unweaned child, murmuring his wordless song
The bondmen and the free, the rich, the poor,
All—all to death belong !

- “The sunlight gilds the walls
Of kingly sepulchers enwrought with brass;
And the long shadow of the cypress falls
Athwart the common grass.
- “The living of gone time
Builted their glorious cities by the sea,
And, awful in their greatness, sat sublime,
As if no change could be.
- “There was the eloquent tongue;
‘The poet’s heart, the sage’s soul was there;
And loving women with their children young,
The faithful and the fair.
- “They were, but they are not;
Suns rose and set, and earth put on her bloom,
While man, submitting to the common lot,
Went down into the tomb.
- “And still, amid the wrecks
Of mighty generations passed away,
Earth’s honest growth, the fragrant wild flower, leaks
The tomb of yesterday.
- “And in the twilight deep
Go veiled women forth, like her who went,
Sister of Lazarus, to the grave to weep,
To breathe in low lament.

“The dead are everywhere ;
Where'er is love, or tenderness, or faith ;
Where'er is pleasure, pomp, or pride ; where'er
Life is, or was, is death.”

But what of this endless waste of human life ? What of these continual death-struggles and funeral processions ? What of these numberless partings from friends, this wreck of human hopes, and this entire destruction of earthly prospects ? What though man, at every step, weeps and groans ? What though every avenue of life leads to the grave ? The glorious truth which Christ taught to those weeping relatives around the grave of Lazarus, is calculated to drown our fears and dissipate our sorrows.

Martha, “thy brother shall rise again.” “Lord, I know that he shall rise in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said unto her, “I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” In other places in the Scriptures we have seen Christ in other aspects : as the friend of the widow and the support of the orphan, as the eloquent teacher and the inspired prophet, as the man of sorrows and the crucified impostor. Here we see Him as the conqueror of death. At other times the winds at His command are hushed, the turbulent billows of

ocean sink to rest, the surging powers of the human heart are quieted; but now we see DEATH obedient to His command, and yielding to the slightest expression of His will. The mocked and derided One stands calmly before the cave where the dead man has lain four days, and with wondrous control over the millions of the dead, says, "Come forth." They who scoff at the resurrection, and deride it as a dogma of human creed, must see Him there—must hear Him utter His sublime command—must see the prompt and immediate obedience.

The resurrection is peculiarly a Christian doctrine; it is peculiarly welcome to the Christian heart, and gives endurance and strength to the Christian's faith. As a Christian, I love it, and rejoice in it. It removes the terrors of death, and pours around the grave a light so intense and dazzling, that while in the caverns of death I seem to be walking amid all the splendors of heaven. Skepticism may endeavor to demolish it by ingenious sophistry; blank infidelity may at once deny its truth; unbelief may cavil and urge objections; but I will believe, and rest upon it my hopes of earth and heaven.

I remember one who sustained to me the relation of a brother. He was my guide through childhood, and my heart clung to him as to an only one. But

he was stricken down ; the hand of death took him away, and left me alone. I saw him die, one weary night, when not a star shone out. We buried him ; a long train of mourners followed to the grave, and stood weeping there, while cold winds howled around. There was a sound which grated on my ear when the earth rolled in upon the coffin, which I have often heard as, in the still night, my thoughts wander back to that sad season, when the stricken heart of a widowed mother felt that her staff and stay had been removed. A few weeks ago I saw that form again. Time and decay had made sad havoc on that noble brow, and marred that countenance, which once beamed with intelligence, or lighted up with piety. But as I stood in one of the most beautiful cemeteries of the land, and looked upon the poor remains of one with whom I had taken sweet counsel, and gone to the house of God in company, I heard repeated, in the clear, distinct, and silvery tones of Christ himself, “Thy brother shall rise again !” Again I looked into the coffin, and saw that now decayed form. Faith at once began to transform it. I saw the change. The bones and the flesh came again ; the dead form arose ; the coffin crumbled ; the grave-clothes were scattered ; and, arrayed in new beauty, and instinct with new life, crowned with glory, and adorned in light, the dead came out again to life

and beauty. It was no illusion, which never could be realized, but the deep, mysterious teachings of Christian faith. I could rejoice in death ; I could shout my triumph over the grave ; I could hail with joy the fearful hour when my flesh would see corruption, but in my spirit I should see God.

“Triumphant is the victor’s brow,
Fanned by some guardian angel’s wing ;
O grave, where is thy victory now ?
And where, O death, is now thy sting ?”

CHAPTER III.

DEATH OF A SISTER.

She hath given up the ghost ; her sun is gone down while it was yet day. *Jeremiah.*

GOD speaks to man in different ways. Once He came down Himself, and in the cool of the day, walked and talked with the creatures He had made. They heard His voice, they saw His countenance, and were cheered by His familiar and unbroken companionship.

At another time God came in the flood, which swept with desolating fury over a world of sin, leaving one poor ark alone to outride the storm, and float over the wide watery waste, a striking exception to the world's great wreck.

Again he came in the thunders and lightning of Mount Sinai, when the old mountain reeled and quaked, and streamed with living lessons of terror and dismay. God was there, in the clouds and darkness, tempest and storm, fire and earthquake.

He was seen in the floods of fire which swept over the cities of the plain, and wrapped the tem-

ples and towers of guilty Sodom in one vast conflagration.

In gentle tones the voice of Deity has been heard ; in the gracious gospel of his Son ; in the revolving seasons, and the return of seed-time and harvest ; in the Bible ; in the ministrations of the Holy Spirit ; and in the numberless changes which are occurring on earth.

He comes, He speaks in every death-bed scene, and in every funeral procession. Sometimes to nations, as when recently the head of the Federal Government was stricken down ; then a venerable Ex-President ; and then one of the Judges of the Supreme Court. Each of these cases was God's voice, echoing and re-echoing through this great confederacy of States, and proclaiming to Princes, and Senators, and Judges, that death levels alike the rich and poor, the honored and the despised. Sometimes He speaks to churches, as when a loved minister, or a godly deacon, or a valued member is removed, and his place in the religious circle is left vacant. Again He speaks to families, as when a parent is cut down, and a wail of grief sounds over the embers which are dying on the hearth-stone.

To-day we mourn a sister, who has fallen in the bloom of youth, a victim to the ravages of death, like a flower cut down prematurely, or a silken cord

too soon broken by a ruthless hand. Her death is the voice of God appealing to the hearts of the young, and uttering lessons of wisdom such as never fell from the lips of sage or oracle.

1. Her death is full of *sadness*. We very naturally dislike to see any enterprise crushed ere it has had time to develop itself; we dislike to see any project abandoned ere time has been given to test its practicability. But when a young person dies, a glorious enterprise is abandoned, ere its probable effects are certain; a noble project is crushed in the very dawning of its glory.

We expect the aged to die. They have pursued their course; they have lived many years, and grown old in the duties and employments of life; and when old age comes on, attended with weariness and pain, we all feel that death is a welcome relief. Tired nature needs repose, and when the infirmities of age find rest in the grave, though we may miss the society and mourn the loss of our departed friends, we yield to the trial, not as to an insupportable calamity, but as to a wise and benevolent arrangement, which we would not alter if we could.

Infants also die, and beyond the family circle, the event produces no impression. The little one was indeed dear to the heart of father and mother, but the great world careth not when an in

fant dies. It is not a common loss ; it is a grief which remains pent up in a mother's bosom, or lies like a heavy weight upon a father's heart, crushing that to pieces, while beyond, not a thought is cherished, not a tear is shed, not a pang is felt. The busy world sweeps on as ever, and the crowd cares not to know whose little one is being borne away to the grave.

These two extremes of life, when they close in death, produce the least impression. For the infant's death few care, and when the old man departs, all are resigned as to an event in the order of nature, whose wheels never can be reversed.

We seldom regret to see the sun set at night, behind the western hills. We watch the glorious orb as its last parting beams fade entirely away, and return to our homes with no emotions of sorrow. Nature has done its work ; the enterprise of a day has been completed ; the race is run, and the setting of that bright luminary is a sequence of nature.

But should you see the sun arise in the morning, ascend the skies, and when the meridian was nearly attained, fall suddenly and leave the world in darkness, a gloom would fill all your hearts. You would feel that the work was not completed ; the race not fully run. Now when the old man dies, it is the sun at night, sinking behind the western hills ; the

death of a young person is as the sun falling suddenly from mid-heavens, and leaving deep shadows upon the earth. We feel that the hopes and aspirations of life have all been crushed by the iron heel of death in their opening bloom ; that the most dazzling prospects have faded in an hour. And how much of such sadness must we feel to-day ! One who has been loved and cherished with much affection ; who has been the light and the joy of many hearts, has been removed from all the scenes of earth. A father and mother came and looked upon the scene, bade the monster retire ; with all the earnestness of parental authority demanded the release of their child ; but heedless of their remonstrances, the work was done, and before their very eyes death placed his signet on this pale brow. Brothers and sisters besought the tyrant to depart, wept, plead, prayed, and the result you see in the coffin. Her sun went down while it was yet day ; her hopes withered like the broken leaves of a tiny flower ; her desires of future good, and future pleasure, lie with her in the grave, and sorrow sits brooding over the scene with tears and lamentations.

2. Her death is a *warning* to the thoughtless. Death is a fact and not a theory. Poetry and eloquence may cover the grave with garlands, but its yawning mouth is there still ; fine rhetoric may weave fancy figures on the door of the tomb, but

the tomb remains ; affection and love of life may scatter roses along the dark avenues of the sepulcher, but the damp, the sickly smell, the horrid scenes are not taken away. Death is so certain that few—none can deny it. Life, from the gates of Eden down to the present hour, is full of death. Huge mounds are filled with the dust of orators and kings ; the paths to honor and disgrace are alike whitened with human bones, and the thick ranks of the living are but the parts of one long procession going down to the dead.

But the matter appeals to us not as a fact but as a theory. Like some scientific truth, it forms a part of our knowledge, but not of our being. But when from our midst one is taken away ; not an infant whom none knows, and for whom few stop to mourn ; not an old man whose course is finished, and who has lived all his appointed time ; but a sister in the very bloom of youth and vigor of health, the theory becomes a fact, a stern and terrible reality. Men may cavil at an argument, and resist an appeal from the human lip, but none can cavil at an early death, or resist the appeal made by such a fact as has so recently wrung our hearts with anguish.

We are too apt to say, “ Age may die, but the young, the strong, will not ; others may fall into the grave, but I need not fear.” One such death

as has now taken place, overturns all such philosophy, and brings the subject home to the heart and conscience. Who can gaze upon the memorials of stricken mortality—the shroud, the coffin, and the pale corpse, and not feel that he has something to do with the groans of sickness, and some preparation to make for the hour of death. The death of a young person utters a testimony and teaches a lesson on this subject, which can be drawn from no other source. It speaks to those whose affections are warm, whose limbs are active, in whose hearts the blood flows freely, and around whose heads cluster the richest promises of future love and joy. It says, not to the old man in life's decline, but to the young and lovely, "Be ye also ready."

Thoughtless, indeed, must be the man who imagines he has no preparation to make to meet death, no house to set in order, no sin to confess, no wrong to repair. All have duties, and every early death assures us of the importance of having them all discharged.

3. The death of a young Christian is full of *glory*. It may be asked what glory there is in an early death, in the pale, cold symbols of decay. True, these things are glorious only in their connection with, and relation to other things. There is no glory in decay, in a prostration of all the animal powers in being shut up in the tomb. But there

is glory in passing away from corruption and death, as the spirit—the soul does when death dissolves the mystic charm of life. There is glory in a state of exaltation at God's right hand, in the ineffable brightness of the spirit world; in the celestial radiance of heaven, into which the liberated soul enters and dwells with God. Suppose near you lived a man, who was the inhabitant of an old, shattered, dilapidated mansion. As he went out in the morning he was conscious that he was leaving behind him a starving family. As he returned home at night he knew that the first call of those dear ones would be for bread, of which he had none to give. He had unpaid debts, and needy creditors, and no means to liquidate those debts, or cancel those demands. And suppose, while residing in this miserable tenement, and bewailing his sad lot, a messenger arrives to inform him that a fortune has been left to him with titles and houses, and assures him that he is to become the monarch of the nation, the loved and the prized of all. Would not the Jews be glorious? would not his removal from a house to a palace be glorious?

Something like this is the change when a young disciple is called home to God. A young spirit is summoned from all the sin, error, strife, shame, and sorrow of earth to a house not made with hands, eternal and on high. Here she is the inhabitant

of an old decayed mansion of dust and ashes ; there she is the occupant of a throne. Here she is surrounded with woes which hourly rise to rend her heart with anguish, and draw the tears of sorrow from her eyes ; there all her tears are wiped away, and she complains of sickness no more. Here she sins and suffers—suffers and sins ; there she loves and sings—sings and loves forever and ever. The soul removed from its old, worn-out tabernacle, released from flesh, rises on wings sublime, free from temptations and all sorrows, to perfect, endless felicity. What she has prayed for, aspired to, and longed for, she now receives. She lives for Christ ; she is with Christ ; she is like Christ.

The monarch may talk of glorious thrones, princely estates, and royal honors ; the warrior may boast of the glory of battle-fields, of armies defeated, of the furious charge, the mad resistance, the splendid victory. But the glory of the Christian begins where that of the monarch and the warrior ends. When their wreath fades, his is fresh and green. He triumphs in his defeats, and lives even in his death.

Gather all the crowns which ever decorated the heads of kings and emperors, in all ages and in all climes ; condense their brightness, and gather their brilliancy into one costly diadem, and it would not shine half as brightly as that which shall be placed

upon the head of the weakest saint, the moment he passes from this vale of tears to ascribe salvation to the Lamb. Gather all the honor of the world, and blow it out at one blast through the trumpet of fame, and it will not equal the honor which the dying saint has in one minute of time.

No wonder that the Psalmist exclaimed, "Though I walk through the valley and the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;" no wonder Paul could cry out, "O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory;" no wonder Halberton, in the midst of the most intense bodily anguish, could clasp his withered hands in delight and say, "Almost there! almost there!" No wonder Everts, the beloved friend of a perishing race, could die crying out at the top of his expiring voice, "O wonderful, wonderful, wonderful glory! Jesus, I see Him; I will praise Him!" No wonder the sister whom we mourn could die with a Christian's composure, in the firm hope of a glorious resurrection, calmly saying to death, "I fear you not; come on, O come."

"I saw her on the bed of death,
Stern illness paled her brow;
I watched her short and fleeting breath,
And marked her gently bow

“ To that grim monarch of the grave,
Who takes us all in trust,
And knew that none, but One, could save
That form from early dust.

“ But all was still and tranquil there,
There was no troubled swell;
Her spirit meekly breathed a prayer,
Then whispered, ‘ all is well.’
’Twas twilight, and a fitting hour,
For souls like hers to steal
Away from earth, like some fair flower
Impressed with heaven’s seal.

“ Like some bright vision of the night,
Or like a meteor’s ray
Of brilliancy, upon the sight,
She calmly passed away.
And thus a gentle spirit’s gone,
To seek its home above,
And mingle with that holy throng,
With Him whose name is Love.”

To-day, another grave is made in yonder graveyard ; one who has walked, and talked, and sung with us ; who has shared our joys and been the partner of our sorrows, is now no more. All that remains is the cold clay, and that we must quickly bury out of our sight. But while the form has gone, the spirit still lingers and hovers over the surviving

friends ; though the body is not here, the sweet and precious memory of virtue and goodness is left for us to cherish. The one who has descended to the tomb was loved in life, she is remembered in death ; she was prized and honored on earth, she will be sanctified in heaven ; and the tender hymn which we sang but a moment ago over her pale form, will often be sang by those brothers who are now weeping over her coffin. It will be sung as long as the memory of virtue shall continue, and unaffected goodness shall be appreciated.

“ Sister, thou wast mild and lovely,
Gentle as the summer breeze,
Pleasant as the air of evening,
When it floats among the trees.

“ Peaceful be thy silent slumber—
Peaceful in the grave so low :
Thou no more wilt join our number ;
Thou no more our songs shalt know.

“ Dearest sister, thou hast left us ;
Here thy loss we deeply feel ;
But 'tis God that hath bereft us :
He can all our sorrows heal.

“ Yet again we hope to meet thee,
When the day of life is fled,
Then in heaven with joy to greet thee,
Where no farewell tear is shed.”

We would not linger too long over the grave, or shed too many tears for bereaved affection. The departed one does not need our lamentations. She wears a crown of glory now, and a robe of light. Her companions are the pure spirits of the upper world, and her cup of joy is full. Let us, instead of spending our time in weak and unavailing complaints, lift our hearts to the great God, that the bereavement may be sanctified to us. Let it teach us humility, and quiet submission to the will of God. Let it chasten and purify our spirits, lift us above the world and its storms, and prepare us for the hour of our own departure, and the end of all things. Listen to the beautiful language of another :

“In the city, while men are brawling in the crowded streets, death is entering the secret chambers, and friends sit pallid by the couches of the breathless, or love is drinking in the sigh which bears the soul to Heaven. Death is silent ; those whose every look spoke to us in life, pass from our sight as the shadow from the dial, and the music from their words becomes sad echoes in the distance of our memory. Death is silent ; living hatred thunders in the strife of war, but when the contest is over, Death, grim and speechless, is monarch of the field. Death is silent ; tempests shriek madly upon the ocean, and many are they who sink with this requiem into their fathomless grave ; but from

the depths of that sublime sepulcher, no sound comes back to tell of those who perished. Death is silent ; yet not so entirely ; silent it is to the ear, but not always to the heart ; our brethren are still bound to us, and though dead, they have not ceased to be. There is much to be felt and learned where they rest.

“ Humility has instruction from the proud man’s monument, and content a lesson from the vanity that overlies his clay. There is pathos in the solitude where the stranger sleeps ; there is mute eloquence on his unlettered grave ; there is beauty in the poor man’s epitaph, inscribed honestly by affection ; there is sublimity in the rude sculpture of the peasant’s tomb, when it is the effort to symbolize an immortal faith. And it is such faith which takes terror from the power of death, and despair from the silence of the grave. There is that in us which is not all clay. That which belongs to earth must go to earth ; but when earth claims and gets back its atoms, God gathers up and calls home His spirits.’ ”

CHAPTER IV.

DEATH OF A MOTHER.

I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother. *David.*

INFINITE wisdom has been displayed in the arrangement of human society. A wise division has been made by Him who cannot err, and to one has been given the office of ruler, and to another the condition of subject; to one the honor and authority of parent, and to another the obedience and love of the child. These stations, growing naturally out of the wants of our race, are continually changing. It is God's plan that the subject of to-day should be the ruler of to-morrow; that the child now, should ere long become the parent.

These relations involve a greater or lesser degree of responsibility, and out of each specific relation will flow, and must flow, specific duties and obligations. The child is bound to love and obey the parent; the parent is bound to love and protect the child. The relation existing between these parties, and the obligation which grows out of it, is not fixed by conventional usage, nor by legal statutes, nor by the Holy Scriptures, alone. Human

nature itself owns the tie which binds the mother to the daughter, and the father to the son, and wherever that nature is found, be it in savage or civilized life, we find the relation existing, and, to a considerable extent, the obligation recognized. The wildest heathen mother clasps her babe fondly and tenderly to her bosom ; the rudest savage of the forest will sacrifice his own life for his infant child ; the wretched murderer, whose hand is red with blood, whose heart is polluted with crime, whose feet are swift to do wrong, and whose public life is against all that is good, and true, and pure, and virtuous, will steal home from his wanderings, to gaze, unseen and undetected, at some lonely evening hour, upon his family. The fierce outlaw, whose whole existence is a monstrous outrage upon civilization, and for whose head a reward is offered, and upon whom a price is set, will turn from his career of blood, leave his companions in crime, and stay his murderous hand long enough to caress, with all the warm gush of a father's kindness, his offspring, and show that there is yet one spot in his heart which love can reach, and around which innocence yet lingers.

These relations, instituted by God, regulated by the gospel, and sanctified by grace, become doubly strong, and give to this vain, perishing, and suffering life much of its pleasure and profit. Hence.

when they are broken up by death the deepest sorrow extends through the whole circle, and those who survive, shed many and bitter tears over those who die.

But of all the losses which we are called to sustain, few are more sad than the decease of the mother of a large family of children. When one such departs, the tenderest feelings are stirred, and the deepest emotions of sorrow overflow the soul. The friend and guide of our youth departs; the partner of our infant joys and sorrows, the sharer of our maturer prosperity and adversity, the kind companion and adviser, is laid in the grave, no more to be seen or loved on earth.

The loss of such a mother some deplore to-day. Inexorable death has come into one of our families, and in a single week wrought a work which months and years cannot repair; made heart-wounds which no lapse of time can heal. Unstayed by prayers and tears, he has performed his task, as if entirely heedless of the consequences, and hurried a dutiful daughter, a kind sister, an affectionate wife, and a devoted mother, down into the long, unbroken silence of the tomb. My work, on this mournful occasion, shall be to speak of a few things which render the parting of a pious mother from her children a source of unusual sorrow.

1. *The intimacy of her relation to them.* No

person on earth comes so near to the heart of a child as the one addressed by the endearing name of "mother." The father may be fondly and tenderly loved, and other friends may be valued highly, but there is a spot unfilled except by a mother's form. It is her part to watch for the first signs of dawning reason, to defend her infant one from dangerous damps at night, and chilling blasts by day, to supply the food by which life is supported, to hang over the couch in sickness, to nestle in her bosom when dangers are abroad. God in His wisdom has so arranged, that to her is committed the early culture of those whom He from time to time commits to her charge, and they grow up with a confidence in her which no other person can receive. All through childhood the mother's character and daily life is the study of her children. If she kneels in prayer, they mark the act; if she weeps, they see her tears; if she is sick, they listen to her sighs; if she is glad, they share her pleasures; if she is afflicted, they feel that a cloud has covered them, though they may not know the cause. From a husband a woman may conceal her joys and hide her sorrows; deep in her own heart she may bury from the world all her anxieties, but alone with her children they will gush out. Thus the child grows up, feeling that his mother cannot say a wrong word, nor do a wrong act. All his little sorrows

he pours into her bosom—all his trifling losses he unfolds to her, and her advice is law to him in all his childish sports. A tie is formed which can never be broken, and to her gentle heart she binds her son with cords of love. Go to the abandoned wretch who is lost to home, to family, to society, to all that is lovely and of good report—go to him in his dungeon, where he awaits a felon's doom, and you will converse long with him ere he will feel. All the consequences of his crimes he will review with cool, calculating hardness; all the motives which can be drawn from the loss of the soul and the loss of heaven he will resist. Even the Cross of Christ and the love of Calvary he will spurn as unworthy of his consideration; but, touch his pious, sainted mother, whom he followed to the grave long time ago; carry him back to the time when she took him upon her knee, and taught him to pray, "Our Father who art in Heaven," and you will soon see the tears flowing down his hardened cheeks; his voice will tremble as he replies to your kind advice, and you will find that deep in the heart is a place consecrated to a mother's memory, into which the passion of crime has not yet entered. The name of his mother carries him back beyond his crimes, beyond his hardness, beyond his first departure from the path of rectitude to the sunny days of innocence, when at night he

could lay his head upon her bosom, and slumber as sweetly as an angel ; to a time when—

“ Innocence upon the breast of love,
Was cradled in a sinful world like this.”

This affection, which outlives time, and changes, and crimes, and sorrows, is the result of that holy intimacy which ever must exist between a good mother and her children. And when she is taken away, her death causes a dreadful chasm in the family circle, which it is hard to fill or heal. To whom can the child go when weary and faint ? On whose breast can the aching head be leaned ? And whose hand shall wipe the cold brow when the death damp is upon it ? The father may love, pity, and pray, but his hand was made for a rough contest with the world, and not for such tender offices. Who like a mother can listen to the tale of temptation, and affliction, and distress ? What counselor and confidant can a daughter have like her, in all her plans for life ? Home without a mother, is a tree without leaves ; a hearth-stone without fire ; a night without a moon.

2. *The child is peculiarly dependent on the mother.* There may be intimacy without dependence in some relations, but not in this. And here the dependence does not consist in the supply of food and raiment ; a father's means may purchase all

these, after the mother has departed. The hundred kind attentions which we need from infancy to manhood, and which none but a mother thinks of; the duties which stretch themselves along from the cradle to the battle-field of life; the unobtrusive charities of home, depend on her. From the very nature of the case, the father cannot think of them, nor attend to them. His work is beyond the limits of the family circle, and with the sun he goes forth to toil. God has never made it his duty to act the maternal part, or be at home while he is abroad. His time in his family is of necessity limited; his opportunities for impressing divine truth upon the younger members of his household, of necessity, few. He has cares of business, cares of church, cares of state. Now, he sits up late at night, poring over long accounts; now, he leaves his home, and crosses rivers, and perhaps oceans, to promote his interests, which are identical with the interests of his family; now, perplexing schemes harass his mind and draw off his thoughts; the failure of a bank, pressure in money markets, the erratic course of commercial enterprise, the thousand changes of business life, all prevent him from attending to his family, and unfit him to exert that wholesome discipline and influence which he might, were he always at home. Hence all this must come upon the mother. It is her influence, and example.

and precept which must lead her offspring to prayer. She must teach him the hallowed and divine ideas of God; she must lead him to a throne of grace, and unfold to the opening mind the utility and pleasure of this duty. She must superintend his early education, place in his hands proper books, instruct him in the things which are excellent, and hold him back from the knowledge of evil. She must cultivate the moral nature, and implant in the tender and plastic soul those high ideas of right which will enable him to shun the bad and pursue the good. No teacher of literature or religion can undo the lessons impressed upon the mind and heart by the mother; and that mother who allows the stranger to form the rising years, and the unfolding minds of her little charge, is doing them an irreparable injury. If we will look back over the great names to which our world has given birth, we shall find that almost every thing is to be attributed in the work of making great men, to mothers. The mother of John and Charles Wesley reared a large family of children, and their education and early training was wholly superintended by herself. The trust committed to her keeping was too sacred to be intrusted to others, and though crowded by other duties, assumed the whole work herself. What John Wesley was, and what the vast denomination which bears his name now is, may,

under God, be traced to the influence of a good mother. John Newton, when but four years old, had been taught by his mother to read in any part of the Bible, and had committed all the questions, answers, and proofs in the "Assembly's Short Catechism," and could recite readily many chapters from the Old and New Testaments. His mind was formed by a good woman, who loved God and understood her duty to her children, and though she died when John was seven years of age, and he was left in the care of a stern, cold, cruel man, yet the world and sin could not blot out those seven years of holy light and influence. The memory of these blessings followed him into the world, through the dark labyrinths of infidelity, and at length in the employment of the Holy Ghost, they brought him to the feet of Jesus, and made him a humble minister of righteousness.

Oberlin ascribes his conversion and his future good, and all his usefulness to the influence of his mother. His biographer says of her, "She was, indeed, a truly admirable woman, and conscientiously endeavored to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." She was in the habit of assembling them together every evening, and of reading aloud some instructive book, while they sat around the table, engaged in childish occupations ; and scarcely a night passed, but when

on the point of separating, there was a general request for "one beautiful hymn," with which she generally complied. The hymn was followed by a prayer; and thus their infant steps were conducted to Him who has said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." Under such teachings the mind of Oberlin became impressed with the importance of loving and serving God, and was finally led to the Lord Jesus Christ. Cecil once said, "I should have been a bold, blaspheming infidel, but for my mother, who continually dropped things in my way." Dr. Buchan says of his mother, "She was the hand ever pointing me to Christ."

Such instances as these could be multiplied to almost any extent, going to show the influence of mothers upon the minds of their children, and proving most conclusively that to her, far more than to the father, is committed the early development of the youthful intellect and heart.

Nor does this dependence cease with childhood. But few of us ever outgrow maternal care until she who has watched over us has been laid in the grave. Who is it that sits up at night, watching for her wayward son and daughter, that they may not retire to rest cold, and faint, and hungry? Who is it that has a kind word and a cheerful look, and an open heart for the wanderer, long after the world has given him up as lost? Who goes to God in prayer

when the wife of his bosom has thrown him off, and his own children have disowned him, and the world has cast him out? Who wakes at night to weep for him, while he wanders in distant lands, or rides on billows deep and dark, or sits in dens of woe, or starves on foreign soil, without a home? Who plies her needle until the noon of night, that she may earn a pittance to make him comfortable? What hand is the most active when he is sick, and what heart bleeds the freest when he dies?

A traitor was once condemned to death, and stood in sullen silence awaiting his execution. His family came to bid him farewell. His father advanced and cursed his traitorous son. His sister came and spit upon him, saying, "You have acted a traitor's part, receive a traitor's reward." His wife came, and pointed at him the finger of scorn, and taught his own children to hate him, for his injustice to his bleeding country. And last of all, his mother came, and when she saw him, her heart relented, and she fell upon his neck and wept, exclaiming, "My son! my son!"

Now, when a good mother dies, all this dependence ceases. The thousand little acts, and kind words, and judicious advice ends, and one of the truest friends ever given to man in his pilgrimage of sorrow is lost. The hand that often placed the cordial to the lips lies still in death; the lips which

have uttered such kind words, and offered so many prayers, are motionless; the heart which has so many weary years beat with such fearful intensity for the welfare of her children, is pulseless. The weary watch has ceased; the undying love is ended the tears have all been shed, and the last gush of maternal tenderness has had its flow. We cannot be surprised that the Psalmist, when he wished to portray his deep and unaffected sorrow at his repeated disasters, at the treachery of his friends and the hatred of his foes, at the deep and successive waves of sorrow which were rolling over him, should declare that he was bowed down as heavily as one who was sorrowing for his mother.

3. *A mother's loss is irreparable.* Nothing can be substituted in her stead. The father, indeed, may do much to amend the calamity. He may withdraw his attention from the pursuits of life to watch over his motherless children; he may increase his attention to every want, and ever be on the watch to anticipate every wish; but he is the father still, not the mother. God has given us two parents, and one cannot fill the place of the other, any more than the sun can fill the station of the moon, its paler and more gentle rival.

A husband or a wife can do much to make amends for the loss of a mother; but no husband or wife can fill a mother's place. God has not so designed

it. The relations are different, and from the very nature of the case one does not supersede the blessing of the other.

The brother or the sister may be kind, and, attentive, and amiable, but the love of a mother, a brother does not know, and to it a sister is a stranger. All these and others may come in, and with angel goodness endeavor to heal the wound, and bind up the aching heart, but not one of them is the mother that gave thee being. Such being the case, we look upon the death of the mother as one of the greatest calamities which can befall a happy and united family. There are, indeed, sources of hope in her death, if she be pious, and yet the nature of the loss is such that we can hardly estimate its solemnity, or gauge the depth of its anguish. It comes to the children, be they old or young, as the crushing of their dearest friend, as the sundering of their dearest ties, as the loss of their most valued counselor. We wonder not that children go so often and so sadly to the places where the ashes of their departed parents sleep; we wonder not that they love to decorate the tomb, and plant flowers upon it, that all may not seem lonely and cheerless there; we wonder not that they grieve, and sigh, and lament, for a good mother is worthy of more tears than were ever yet shed over a human grave.

The conclusion then to which I come, and the thoughts which I would deeply impress are, that we should respect good mothers while living, and remember and honor them when dead. While we have our parents we are apt to esteem them lightly. Like all other blessings, they are not truly valued until they have fled from our embrace, and we are conscious that they are gone. The faults of youth, and even of mature years, may generally be traced to a disregard of parental, and especially maternal advice and counsel. Situated as the mother is, away from the world, and on a higher vantage ground, she can see things through an atmosphere less murky than the prejudices by which the children are often surrounded. She is able to foresee dangers, where her less experienced and more impulsive offspring behold nothing but sunshine and delight. Many a son would have been held back from intellectual, social, and moral prostitution, had he not despised the counsel of his mother, and set at naught the wise and judicious advice which, in the goodness of her heart, was tendered. Many a daughter would have saved herself many a heart-pang, and many tearful scenes, had she trusted to words of sound judgment and discretion, which were uttered ere she left the parental roof to find a home among those who have no interest in the welfare of her soul. I would urge thee, then, if thou

hast a mother, to respect her now, to value her now, and abide by counsels which may secure thee from hours of sorrow and distress.

And when she dies cherish her memory. In a graveyard, in a neighboring town, is a plain white slab standing over a grave, and on that marble is inscribed these simple words, "My Mother." And what could express more truthfully and beautifully the higher characteristics of a woman, and the respect which her children entertain for her resting place, than this simple memorial.

"My Mother ! at that holy name
 Within my bosom there's a gush
 Of feeling, which no time can tame,
 And which, for worlds of fame,
 I would not, could not crush."

I have been led to these remarks by the decease of a mother of a large family within a short distance of the house of our solemnities. By her removal, an aged father has been deprived of a daughter, whose delight had been to minister to his comfort ; a husband is left to mourn over one who has been with him in joy and sorrow ; with whom he has taken sweet counsel, and whose life has been identified with his, through a long series of years ; and the children are deprived of a mother who has sacrificed her own comfort, and ease, and welfare,

for their good ; who has employed herself in devising plans and executing purposes for their happiness ; who has studied to make them happy here, and prepare them for lasting joys hereafter. For such a wife and such a mother tears should be freely shed, and He who wept over the body of His friend Lazarus would not stay them. A meek, humble, quiet life of domestic experience has closed, and the friend who has followed you with so much kindness through life, has ended her labors, and entered upon her reward. Thy lovely home will no more echo with the tones of her voice, thy table will no more be spread with the offerings of her toils ; thy heart will no more be cheered by her kind attentions.

Summon to your aid and comfort her memory ; review her life of unostentatious piety ; consider her present felicity, and when tempted to wish her back to toil and weep, and suffer and die again, let her beatified state, and her heavenly condition, stifle each murmuring thought, and drive from the lips each discontented expression. Let the sad bereavement lead the afflicted husband and his weeping children to the throne of grace, to seek before God that humble trust and faith which will enable them to conquer death and overcome the grave. The spirit of your sainted sister, who in the spring-time was laid to rest, came to call your mother home,

and soon she may be commanded to summon you to the upper world. More than half of your family have already gone, and you only wait the bidding of Jehovah.

A few days since, you and I looked down into that tomb in a distant town ; it was dark, and cold, and cheerless ; the mouldering coffins, and the sweat of the grave, and the stillness, were there. Thou wast looking then into thine own home, and gazing upon the place in which your bones will repose. The sight was sad and salutary, and as we turned away, methought I heard within a voice, and echoed by the rustling leaves,

“ Roses bloom, and then they wither,
Cheeks are bright, then fade and die ;
Shapes of light are wafted hither,
Then like visions hurry by.”

The death of a person under the circumstances in which our sister left the world, is admonitory to all. It reminds us painfully that families now happy are to be broken up by the iron hand of death, and there is as much prospect that in two weeks hence other mothers will be laid in the grave, as there was two weeks since that the deceased would be placed ere this in the tomb of her kindred. No dependence can be placed on human

life. All we can say is, that we have it now ; that it is still continued, but how soon, like a withered flower, it will disappear we know not.

“ Change is written on the tide,
On the forest’s leafy pride ;
On the streamlet gleaming bright,
On the jeweled crown of night.”

How important that our houses be set in order ; that our duties be all performed ; that our accounts for the last settlement be made up, and our souls all ready for the coming of the Son of Man. At this mournful season of the year, we are reminded on every side of the transitory state of all things earthly. Decaying nature is an emblem of man. The sere and yellow leaf falling to the ground, a withered thing, tells us of mortality. The blight and the mildew are on all around, and like those who have gone before us, we are descending into the tomb.

And how vast the number who have made no preparation for the solemn exchange of worlds ! Hurried on by time with incredible velocity, and nearing the grave, the home of all, they dream only of this life. The flowers bloom and wither, but they do not heed the admonition ; the tree puts forth its leaves, sweeps them on the air awhile, and casts them to the ground ; the cloud arises, hangs over

the world, weeps a few tears on man, and disappears ; the rainbow spans the heavenly arch, and shines in all its splendor and beauty, and fades away ; but none of these figures of our fate are improved by the thoughtless crowd.

“ Who ever hastening to the tomb,
Stoop downward as they run.”

Mothers and fathers die ; sons and daughters are laid away in the cold earth ; brothers and sisters go down into the shades, but men and women live amid their tombs, in all the thoughtlessness of vanity.

How insignificant does all things below appear, when we consider the end we are approaching. A man is diligent in business, and becomes rich ; his storehouse is full, and his coffers are almost inexhaustible, but when he has it all accumulated he dies, and leaves it all to be consumed by others. He seeks for worldly honor and distinction, and soon the applauses of his excited fellow-men fall upon his ears, and when comes to his grateful ears the wildest and freshest burst of gladness, death whispers in his ears, “ Thy time has come,” and huddles him away. He engages in the chase for pleasure, and everywhere pursues the bursting bubbles of this world, and when he has his hand on them they perish, and he lies down to die, feeling

that the great object of his being has not been secured. How worthless, in this view, are all the employments of men ! For what are these splendid cities founded ? for what are these steamships built ? for what is this thousand miles of railroad laid ? for what are colleges erected, and asylums, and manufactories ? to what does all the industry of the world tend ? To the fires of the last conflagration, to the general destruction which awaiteth all things. On this earth all that has any permanent value is the SOUL—the soul, which will outlive the destruction of the body which it has served as a dwelling-place—which will survive the wreck of the last general judgment—which will pursue its onward way over the vast fields of the future, rising higher in the clouds of light, or sinking deeper in the waves of death.

Back from the grave of our departed friend and sister, the wife and mother of this family, comes a sound of warning to us, “Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.”

“Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound,
Mine ears attend the cry ;
Ye living men come view the ground
Where ye must shortly lie.”

CHAPTER V.

DEATH OF A FATHER.

Now, therefore, let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father. *Joseph.*

DEATH is not an uncommon event. Every day these streets echo to the clattering footsteps of the funeral procession. Children at their play stop to gaze at the hearse as it moves along slowly and sadly. Every night some pillow is wet with tears, and every day some heart throbs and bleeds. "It is appointed unto men once to die," and that appointment has spread dismay and terror through every lane and avenue of life.

The pale horse, with Death for its rider, has broken loose from its confinement, and is now trampling, with iron hoof, over the loveliness of the domestic circle, and the sacredness of the house of God. No place — no man — no condition is exempt from its intrusive awfulness. It marks its victim with a hectic flush — a burning brow — a fevered countenance, or a consumptive cough, and never loses sight of him until the work is done. It is useless to fly from the destroyer. He will find you amid the storms and tempests of our

own land—he will follow you to other climes, and cut you down in the midst of friends or foes.

In pursuing this subject farther, I will present

I. The elements which constitute the triumph of death.

II. The elements which will constitute a triumph *over* death.

The awfulness, terror, and triumph of death arises, first—*From the alarming uncertainty of the future state.* Death has been appropriately styled “a leap in the dark”—an uncertain trial of an unknown existence. Had some adventurous traveler entered into the grave—explored its unknown recesses, a new aspect would be given to the whole subject. But, as the pilgrim enters the grave, the door of the sepulcher closes behind him, and he never returns. We accompany him to the tomb, he enters, and we see him no more. We strive to catch a glimpse of his condition, but darkness envelops it, and the longer we gaze the more are we perplexed and confused. Hence have arisen the notions which men cherish on this subject. One makes death “an eternal sleep,” another informs us that the soul loses its own identity in the Deity, while a third contends that the souls of the wicked will be annihilated, and the souls of the righteous will live on forever. Some say that the spirit of man at the death of his body, will en

ter into the frame of brute beast, swimming fish, or humming insect. Others say that spirit is the angel part of man—that the angels were men once, and men will all be angels. Some say that men will be happy in a future state; others say that the righteous will be happy, and the wicked miserable. Uncertainty—dark uncertainty is over the whole subject. Philosophy with her sages, her ponderous volumes, and long array of names—Science with her experiments, her fires and crucibles—History with her full pages and romantic realities, have never cast out one gleam of light upon the grave; and to-day, after millions have died, and passed away to their long home, we derive no instruction from them in regard to the future state. Philosophy tells man to die calmly, for that is honorable and manly. Science teaches him how his body may be embalmed and preserved from corruption. History informs him that thousands have died in triumph; but neither of them have any thing to say in relation to the deathless spirit. Consequently, when the soul plunges off into eternity, it knows not whither it is bound. An awful blank is spread out before it. Its dreams in this life have been dreams of happiness, but what its dreams may be beyond the grave, who can tell?

A second element in the awfulness and triumph of death, is *the mystery of its operations*. There

is a beautiful harmony and a consistent design in all the works of God. The planetary system—the wise arrangement of the seasons—the regulations of air and earth, are all uniform. Deity has fixed a law certain in its operations—fixed in its consequences, to every department of the divine government. In obedience to that principle, earth strikes its note harmonious with heaven, and heaven and earth make melody with air. But death *seems* to act without law—governed by no principle unless that principle be to create as much confusion and distress as possible. It prostrates the fairest works of God—the noblest creations of His hands. It goes not only to the dens of infamy, haunts of woe, and abodes of crime and wretchedness, but it enters the palace of the king, the pulpit of the minister, and the retreat of domestic love. It not only removes the homeless wanderer from earth, but it takes away the father from his bright-eyed boy, and the mother from her nestling child. It comes not only to the orphan, who has no shelter from the storm, but it robs the hearth-side of the child of many prayers, promises, and tears. Gaze over the circle of your friends; look over society to-day, and you find an illustration of the truth of my remark. Why is that mother robed in mourning? It is the outward token of a mourning which the heart alone can feel. Why sits a tear in that fa-

ther's eye? He recollects how once his child gave him one sweet look, glanced its eyes to heaven, and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. Why weeps that child so bitterly? Go to him, and he will tell you how often his little feet have tracked a path around his mother's grave; how he has laid himself down upon the mound which is over his sister's coffin, and how his brother and he have planted flowers all along from the cottage to the grave. Why are we here to-day? What mean these funeral solemnities? Ask the community, as they render their last tribute to the memory of an honest man. Ask the church, as she, weeping, stands to hear his eulogy. Ask the children, as they follow the father's corpse, and lay it down forever in the grave. Ask the widow, who closed his eyes in a stranger land, and returned to her home alone, a widow indeed. To us, this event is full of mystery. Our brother was so kind—so loved—so virtuous, that we thought death would not harm him. But, regardless of every circumstance and every consideration which would lead us to retain him here, death has taken him away, and to-day a sorrowing congregation laments his fall.

“ O'er his pale form a widow bows ;

Around, his lonely children grieve ;

The church, who heard with joy his vows—

The poor he may no more relieve.

“ And was there then no meaner breast,
Wherein the shaft might entrance find ;
Where fewer claims of nature press'd ;
Where fewer hearts would feel the wound ?”

The times, too, at which death comes, is connected with the same *mysterious uncertainty*. It may come in concert with the singing birds, at the rising sun. It may come at noon, when the city is full of life, and all are too busy to stop and hear the dying groan. It may come at midnight, when storms and tempests, its own fit emblems, are raging in the sky. It may come to prattling youth or hoary age. It may come to vigorous man, or weaker woman, and naught can repel it or stay its course. While I am now speaking, the monster comes grinning along, singing the song of the sepulcher, to fix his fangs upon some of this congregation. The aching head—the bleeding lungs—the palpitating heart, tell you that these walls will echo to no funeral sermon again, until yours is preached.

A third element in the triumph of death is *The physical distress which is connected with it*. Usually death gives its warnings before it comes. The symptoms of disease—the awful loneliness of mind—the fearful anticipation of the last struggle, all forebode the hour. We are so constituted that we dread suffering, and as it is one of the woes of

our lot, all measures have been devised to remove it. Physicians have tortured their brain to devise remedies—tortured earth to procure remedies—tortured man to apply remedies. Go with me into the chamber of the sick, and see what havoc death is making. The room is dark, lighted only by the faint glimmer from the half-closed door. On the table you see the glittering lancets of the surgeon, the druggery of the physician, the Bible of the minister. At the foot of the bed sits the husband; his eyes weep not, but his heart is breaking, and the fires within have dried up his tears. Brothers and sisters are there, who come to the bed-side, gaze on a moment, and turn sadly away, while a little child buries its face in the pillow, and cries in anguish, “Mother, mother—do not die—do not die!” But the most sorrowful sight of all, is the victim herself. A few days ago she held high her head; her nodding plume waved amid beauty and fashion on the crowded street. Her cheek was full of life, and her eye gleamed with moral and intellectual aspirations. But death saw her laugh among that crowd; he distinguished her plume above the rest, and aimed his shaft. Wearily she returned to her dwelling, and as she swept through the opening portals, and closed the door behind her, she felt the first pang—it was the sting of death. The pang was removed, the sting was withdrawn, but with-

drawn only that the monster might plunge it to the heart. That night was a night of anguish and tears—sickness ensued—the cheek faded, and before you lies a wasted form—a living, breathing skeleton. She has strength only to toss about from side to side, and soon that, too, is gone. Death has triumphed—the grave has gained a victory.

Go with me again. We pass through the streets, and wend our way amid columns and avenues of men. Soon the crowd is left behind us. The roar of the distant waterfall, and the rolling of the vehicles through the paved streets, are now and then borne to us upon the breeze. We enter a field of graves. We see a path marked “Mortality Avenue,” and enter it. By-and-by we see a sepulcher. The monument over it is old and worn, and bespeaks the dwelling-place of many generations. Now roll away the stone from the door, and gaze in, and what do you see? Over a pile in one place you read, “This dust has returned to dust.” Over another you see the inscription, “Corruption and worms are my portion;” while all around are strewed the victims and vestiges of death. The damp chill—the sickly smell—the unbroken stillness are there, in the citadel of death.

Now all this physical suffering—these parting from friends—these death-struggles, contribute to array the monster in all his terrors.

A fourth element in the awfulness and triumph of death, is found *in our connection with sin*. Sin is the sting of death, and without sin death would not occur, or would be so modified in all its developments, as to minister to the happiness of man. However we might have passed away from the earth after we had fulfilled the design of our being, and filled up, to divine acceptation, the measure of our probation, certain is it, that the grave would never have been chosen as the passage from time to eternity. Death, with its present forms of terror and dismay, would not have been God's minister to lead His sinless children home to heaven. But sin introduced death into the world—unlocked the gates of the bottomless pit, and turned into our world this enemy of God, which is the last which He will destroy. Now to just such an extent as we are connected with sin, is death to be dreaded. All his lifetime the sinner is “subject to bondage,” and as well might a prisoner marching to his execution be joyful, as a sinner journeying on to the judgment-seat of Christ. Woe, woe unto that man who dies without a preparation for death. Nothing is before him but “a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation,” and, like the man who is running over a precipice, he, too, is rushing into the lake which burneth with fire forever.

“How shocking must thy summons be, O death,
To him who is at ease in his possessions ;
Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unfurnished for the world to come !
In that dread moment how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
But shrieks in vain.”

I now proceed to consider,

II. The elements which constitute a victory *over* death and the grave. That the awfulness of death may be removed, we are perfectly sure. Abundant instances are at hand to prove that the sting of death has often been plucked out, and the death-bed made as peaceful as an evening sleep. What was it that induced Edward Dearing to say, “If it were put to my choice whether I should die or live, I would a thousand times rather choose death than life.” Said Robert Bolton, “When shall I be dissolved? When shall I be with Christ?” “See how calm a Christian can die,” were among the last words of Addison. What was it that gave to Payson those thrilling foretastes of future blessedness—brought him to the borders of heaven, and gave him an insight to its joys? What was it that sustained our brother in his last moments, when heart and flesh were failing him, far away from home, and family, and kindred, with one, alone, to

smooth his pillow? What is it that bears up the Christian in every age and in every clime? What magic power is it, that can thus triumph over the infirmities of our nature, and beat down death, even at the mouth of the sepulcher?

I answer: *a preparation to meet death.* This consists, first, *in a vital union to Christ.* The sinner is at enmity with God—in a state of unreconciliation and disobedience. There is not one principle or emotion of his soul, which would lead him to serve or obey God. Now, out of Christ there is no reconciliation. The Father stands robed in the violated law; inapproachable in His holy abhorrence of sin. Out of Christ, He is “a consuming fire,” and looks only to the honor of His government and the vindication of His character. If the sinner dies while he stands in this relation to God, he has nothing to sustain him in death; every attribute of God is arrayed against him, and even the gracious perfections of Deity will sanction his condemnation. But a union to Christ removes that condemnation—covers him with a righteousness not his own—presents him in a new, regenerated character before God, and places his hand in the hand of Christ, and they go down into the grave together.

A second element in preparation for death is, *an assurance of hope.* Many Christians, who in

reality have a part in religion, and are truly the children of God, are like the impenitent, "all their lifetime subject to bondage." Their natural dispositions, their habits of thinking, their peculiar temperaments, or something else connected with the world without, or the heart within, keeps them "bowed like a bulrush." They take the hand of Christ, and go forth, yet doubting His ability or willingness to lead them, and when the Jordan, rolling furiously, breaks upon their ears, and they remember that this is death, they take the hand away from Christ, and cling to earth. The remedy for this is a clear hope—a calm assurance that we have an interest in the death of Christ—that God is our portion—heaven our home. This is attainable. It is within the reach of all. Strive for it—diligently seek it, is enjoined upon us, and if we would die peacefully and triumphantly, we must have an evidence clear—a hope strong—a prospect bright.

The third element in a preparation for death is a *holy life*. "Teach me how to live," says one, "and I will teach you how to die." It is impossible for a Christian to view the approach of death with calmness, if he continues buried up in the perplexities of the world. Christ, faith, and holiness, are the mystic words which dissolve the shades of death. Christ, the efficient, procuring

cause—faith the instrument—holiness the result. If Christ be not formed within, the hope of glory—if faith does not point backward to the cross and forward to the crown—if obedience does not work “to will and to do,” within us, death still has dominion over us. These three elements, then, enter into a preparation for death. *A vital union to Christ—a full assurance of hope—a holy life.* Possess these, and death is vanquished, and the Christian is victor. He dies in triumph.

“His fight is fought, his faith has reached the end,
Firm to the heaven his glance, his heart ascends;
There with the Judge he sees his crown remain,
And if to live be Christ, to die is gain.”

The thoughts which have now been presented, have been suggested by the melancholy death of a beloved brother and fellow-laborer. It is seldom that death summons one from the walks of private life, whose loss is so deeply and generally felt. The family—the church—the community, unite in paying a tribute to his memory. In such a community as this, death comes so often that it produces but little impression upon our minds. We behold its unmerciful hand, breaking up family circles so often, that we lose our horror of it, until it lays its iron grasp on us. We give to the hearse, the coffin, and the shroud, a passing glance, and

hurry on our busy way, and death is forgotten in our anxiety for life. But the death which we mourn to-day has caused a wider gloom. The estimation in which our brother was held by the citizens of the place; the station which he occupied in the church as one of its deacons, the faithful manner in which he had performed his duties, the manner of his death in a far-off land, and the large family of children which he has left behind him, render his fall peculiarly affecting. But a few months since, he stood in the vigor of manhood before the altar to pledge himself to her, who for the second time has been left a widow. Children were there to rejoice in that event, always so full of interest, and the prospect of long life and happiness was before him. But God had otherwise ordained. In less than one year his marriage dress is exchanged for the vestures of the grave—his bright hearth-side, where the vow was made, is exchanged for the coffin and the sepulcher. Death has come, and brought with it all its long train of desolating influences.

He was one of those few men, whose reputation *dare* not touch, whose retreat malignity *dare* not invade, whose motives prejudice *dare* not impugn. Men who knew him best loved him best, and those who associated with him most, valued him most. His religion extended into his business

transactions, and was mingled with the intercourse of daily life. Was he rich? His wealth was not drawn from the earnings of the poor. Was he placed in stations of trust and honor by his fellow men? That preference was not of his own seeking. Was he loved and respected by all? That respect was earned by an upright deportment and a holy life.

He was a tender husband and a kind father, and his fall has left a chasm in the family circle, which He alone can fill, who has promised to be a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow.

His piety was *intelligent, steady, and active*. Its flame never flashed out to burn and bewilder, and then die away in darkness; but its light, like the vestal fire, never went out, and amid the gloom of spiritual night, and the shining of the Sun of Righteousness, he stood erect—a son of thunder to the careless—a son of consolation to the penitent.

But virtue is no refuge against disease. During the summer, the symptoms of dissolution began to appear. Day by day health withdrew his strength, and sickness came on apace. Physicians recommended a visit to Cuba, and with hopes of recovery, he started on the voyage in company with his companion and a male friend. Wrapping his cloak

around him, he stepped into his coach without taking leave of his children, or saying farewell to his family. They knew that he was to leave them, but their sorrow tears could not tell—words could not utter.

Weeks rolled on, and the sad intelligence came, that our brother was no more. Time brought on the widow, but the husband came not, she returned *alone*. Who can fathom the awfulness of that word, *alone*? The voyage was unsuccessful, and death claimed its victim, far from home. One of his last desires was, to return to his native city—to be buried by the grave of his father and of his mother; and to-day we are met amid scenes so familiar to him, to render the last sad tribute to his memory.

The consolation which I would offer to the afflicted relatives to-day, is the blessed assurance that “our brother shall rise again,”—that, “though he be dead, yet shall he live.” There is to be a resurrection. As the sun goes out in darkness, and the last star fades away from the heavens, an angel from the throne of God will gather the scattered dust, and reanimate it with new life and beauty. The body may die, but the spirit will live on. You may go to the graveyard, and weep over the tomb, but he whom you seek is not in the grave. His dust is there, but he himself is gone. The storm

may sweep over the place—desolation may howl around it—darkness may cover it, but storm, and desolation, and darkness, are alike unheeded.

This truth is revealed to us by Christianity. The gospel alone can give us a glimpse into the future world—show us the design of death, even in its most terrible manifestations—give us strength to endure its physical sufferings, and open to us a fountain to cleanse us from our sin.

What philosophy, science, and history could not do, religion has accomplished. From the fires of her own heaven-consecrated altar, she has thrown out a brilliant light, whose divine illuminations have dispelled the darkness of the grave—disarmed death, and established the hopes of immortality. “Thy brother shall rise again.” Blessed assurance! Though the atmosphere of another clime received his parting breath, and his dying groan mingled with the sighing wind—though the body shall see corruption, and mingle with the earth, to form a covering for the bodies of his children—though nothing remains with us but his clay-cold corpse, which we must now “bury out of our sight,” yet his Redeemer liveth, and at the latter day they shall stand together upon the earth:

“The body that, corrupted, fell,
Shall, incorrupted, rise,”

and bloom and flourish in the vigor of an immortal youth. How cold the faith of those who deny the resurrection of the dead ! Like blasted monuments of art, they stand the ruined monuments of divine power loving earth, though it is planted with thorns—clinging to its pleasures, though those pleasures are drugged with the poison of death. We cannot die—

“Heaven and earth

Shall pass away, but that which thinks within me
Must think forever ; that which feels must feel ;
I am, and I can never cease to be.”

There is to be a resurrection, of the just and the unjust. Methinks, that event has come, and I see the spirits of the departed, as they descend from heaven, and stand by yonder tomb and wait until the trumpet of the archangel shall bring the body forth. I ask them why they wait. They reply, “The dead shall rise ;” and, as they speak, the trumpet sounds—the doors of the tomb are burst open—the dead in Christ arise first—the judgment comes. Mother, go forward and find your daughter’s form. Father, behold your long-lost child. Tears and weeping are no more, and, as the last victim of death comes forth, Jesus lays down the scepter at the feet of God, saying a second time, “It is finished,” and death is swallowed up in victory.

Our brother lives, he lives in heaven. Let us,

instead of murmuring at his loss, imitate his example—copy his virtues, so that when the icy hand of death is laid upon us, we may die with that calm trust in God, which made him whom we mourn, so tranquil and happy in his last moments. “May our death be the death of the righteous, and our last end like his.”

Just before his departure from this city, our brother expressed to a friend his determination to do more for the church of which he was a member, and for the cause of Christ generally, than he had ever done before. But of what avail was his resolution? While those words were warm upon his lips, death sealed those lips in silence—shut him out from earthly toil, and opened to him the gates of heaven. He died as the Christian dies, with his thoughts of kindness to the church uppermost in his mind, and his purposes of devotion to his Saviour firmest in his heart.

“O, is it not a noble thing to die
As dies the Christian, with his armor on?
What is the hero's clarion, though its blast
Rings with the mastery of a world, to this?
What are the searching victories of mind—
The lore of vanished ages? What are all
The trumpetings of proud humanity,
To the short history of him who made
His sepulcher beside the King of Kings?”

CHAPTER VI.

DEATH OF AN INFANT.

Is it well with the child? *Elisha.*

SACRED memories cluster around the death and burial of an infant. At its birth, joys unknown to the hearts of others are stirred in the parent's bosom, and a world of affections is opened before him, which he alone is able to explore. At its death, his heart feels a loss such as he has never before sustained, and his affections receive a shock, such as can be given by no other loss. There is an intimacy of relationship between the parent and child, which, if continued, is a source of holy satisfaction: if sundered, becomes a source of untold sorrow. Few continue long in the marriage relation without a happy experience of the bliss which this relationship affords, and few parents there are who have not felt the sorrow of parting, and the grief which must come to the full heart, when from it some bright child is torn rudely away.

In the touching incident related in the Book of Kings, we have the portrait of an afflicted mother sitting down with a dead child, in the sorrow of her heart to feel her loss and bewail it. The prophet

Elisha was called to make repeated visits to the city of Shunem. On one of these visits he became acquainted with a woman of opulence and wealth, who gave him bread to eat, and kindly ministered to all his wants. By his correct demeanor she saw that he was a holy man, and as she was a woman of pious life, she welcomed him to her home, made a little chamber in the wall, where he could be retired from the noise and confusion of the city, and which he could occupy unmolested.

In process of time the woman received from the hand of God a precious gift, of which she had long been denied. To her a son was born, who at once became the light of her home and the joy of her life. The long pent-up feelings of a mother's heart gushed out, and her affections entwined themselves around her new-born babe. She watched over the child day and night, until he grew up a fine lad, able to run about and play with his companions, and enjoy himself after the manner of children. One day he went out into the fields, where his father was employed with his servants gathering in the crop. While there, the hand of disease was laid upon him. Leaving his sports, he went to his father; and, pressing his little hands upon his throbbing temples, cried out: "Oh, my head, my head." The father sent him home to his mother, and on her knee he sat until noon, burying his fevered face in her bosom, and

died. With the calm and subdued sorrow of a godly woman, she took up the corpse, and laid it, yet warm, in the chamber which had been made for Elisha. When this was done she called for a beast, and servants, that she might find the man of God. She might have thought that the prophet could restore her son to life; or else, she hoped to find her distracted heart comforted, by conversing with one whose business it was to comfort those that mourn. Her husband remonstrated at first, and at length yielded to her solicitations. So she came to Mount Carmel, where Elisha was. When the good man saw her coming in such haste, he feared some disaster, and at once inquired, through the medium of Gehazi. "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?"

And what answer suppose you the mother gave to these affecting questions? Did she at once commence to weep and lament, and rend the air with her cries, saying, "No, it is not well with my husband, for he to-day is a childless sire; it is not well with me, for the loved object of my affections has been removed from me; the gift of God is stricken down, and I am again a childless mother; it is not well with the child, for he is dead." Did she say this? No; her calm reply was, "*It is well.*" Then unfolded she to him her sorrow, poured forth the torrent of a mother's bleeding love, and besought his aid.

In every community is found many a broken-hearted Shunamite woman—a mother who is exclaiming, “I have lost my children and am desolate.” As I go out day after day, I hear the voice of Rachel mourning for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not. Bending along through the streets passes the bruised and afflicted parent, who bears on the countenance, and in the heart, deep traces of grief and sorrow. The slightest reference from the pulpit to the death of children will start the tear and awaken the slumbering feeling of sadness, for at once, the mother will remember when her own loved and idolized child was taken from her; the father will call to mind the dark night when he stood over the form of an infant son, whose young and unstained spirit was passing away.

My object in the present article is to lead afflicted parents to feel that it is well with them, and well with their departed children; and in view of this I remark, that the death of your child was—

1. A righteous event. Too often is the feeling cherished that God has no right thus to sunder the ties which bind the parent to the child. The unsubdued heart rises up in rebellion against the Providence which covered it with such clouds; and, instead of bowing before God, and learning the lessons of wisdom which the event is calculated to teach, their lips break forth with impious murmurs

and unavailing regrets. Not long ago I saw a mother who said, "I cannot believe that God is good or kind in the removal of my child. It is not right—it is not just." But that woman had forgotten that her child belonged to God, and was only placed in her arms awhile for a wise and holy purpose. If a sum of money, a mechanical instrument, an article of household furniture, be lent to a friend or neighbor, he does not feel aggrieved when it is called for and reclaimed. He who owns it has a perfect and unquestioned right to call for it, and any refusal to refund it, would be an act of gross injustice. A man's money, his time, and his children, alike belong to God. He is the Maker and the sole proprietor, and the eternal, uncreated source of all things. He has a right to give life or to withhold it: to take it away or to preserve it. If a man loses his breath, he only loses what is not, and never was his own. If his children are taken away, he is deprived only of a lent blessing—a child which God made, and which He placed in the hands of the parents, to be kept only during His pleasure.

If a neighbor should enter your house, and leave one of his dear children to be enjoyed by you one day, or one week, on no principle could you suppose that you might keep it after that parent had returned. Your care of it would not make you its parent, or its lawful possessor. No care which you

could bestow, no money which you could expend, no sacrifice you could make, would change its relation to you, or to its natural guardians. Nor can the near and intimate relation which you sustain to your children, the love you bear them, and the money you expend for them, change the relationship which they sustain to God, their heavenly parent. They are His beyond all question, and hence, when He calls for them, and takes them home, to dwell near His own heart, and in His own presence, you only surrender what was His before.

2. The death of your child is a wise event. God who does it, knows all things : you know but little. He sees far into the future : your vision is bounded by doubts and mysteries. To Him this life appears in a different light from what it does to you. He sees it through a clear atmosphere, and judges more correctly of its worth. Knowing that God foresees all things, we have reason to admire His wisdom in removing children from the sorrows that beset our path. We are born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. All life long we groan and weep, and from the cradle to the grave bewail our lot. It is not likely that your child would escape sorrow, or that he would be the first to pass through life untouched by its trials and unaffected by its bitterness. Now I ask, if God foresees that the form which you embrace with such tenderness, will be

racked with anguish and distracted with sorrow, is it not wise in Him, to take it away to a world where there are no tears? And is it no blessing to you to know that your children have escaped the sorrows incident to life, exchanged the troubled pillow of sickness for perpetual life, the groans of earth for the bliss of heaven?

Were you in abject poverty, and some kind man should come to your door and give food to your children, propose to educate them in all the splendor of royalty, you would let them go; it would prove you narrow, selfish, and cruel to keep your children in a hovel, in ignorance, in want, when they might be well provided for, and educated and honored. You would let them go though it might grieve you to part with them. You would sacrifice your feelings to their welfare, and though you knew you should never see them again you would bless the hand which was leading them away. However much you might love your children, you would not stand in the way of their advancement.

Now in this same manner has God acted toward the child which you have lost. As He looked down from heaven He saw you were unable to make your little one happy, unable to supply its wants, and that you would keep it only for a life of anxiety and care. He took the child away in wisdom, and

it is now enjoying the society of sainted spirits around the throne.

Nor is this all. By an unfortunate combination of circumstances we are all under the influence of sin. Our first responsible acts are sinful, and we grow up averse to God and a holy life. Many of the human family become very wicked, break over all restraints, and almost rival Satan in iniquity. Not content with being sinners, they covet the distinction of being the *chief* of sinners. Now the child whose death you mourn might have become extremely wicked. He might have become a drunkard, a Sabbath-breaker, a gambler, or a profligate. He might have been idle, indolent, vicious, and ended his life on the gallows. He might have smote the bosom that nursed him, the hand that fed him, and the heart that loved him. You shrink now from such a supposition. All the memories of your child are precious, and you have dreamed only of his growing up with a heart of angel goodness. But you have lived long enough, and seen enough of life to know that other parents have had visions as bright as yours, and have had them dashed in a single hour.

David had a son whom he loved. He saw him grow up, and for him he was willing to make any sacrifice. His heart went after Absalom. But the child became a man, and ere long is seen with

an army endeavoring to drive his white-haired sire from his throne, and pursuing him into the caves of the earth. His hopes were blasted, and his visions faded away.

See the bloody Nero, full of hate and violence. He was once a child. See bloody murderers and pirates. They were once meek, gentle children. See the rude, profane young men, and wanton, vicious young women who are found so frequently in large cities! They were all children once, loved by parents, and idolized by their friends.

There is a tide of influence setting toward vice which renders this world a deceitful one, and when with the first gush of parental love you fold a child to your arms, you know not what that child will yet become. He may be virtuous, or he may be vicious. Hence, if God foresees that your child will become depraved, He acts the part of wisdom in removing him from temptation ere the young heart is stained with crime, or the young life is darkened with clouds of gloom and wretchedness. You may not see, and you may not remember, for you are not wise, but God is, and He has acted from the impulse of His own glorious knowledge. You can rejoice as well as mourn, for your child is safe.

“As vernal flowers that scent the morn,
But wither in the rising day,

Thus lovely was the infant's dawn,
Thus swiftly fled his life away.

“He died before his infant soul
Had ever burned with wrong desires—
Had ever spurned at Heaven's control,
Or ever quenched its sacred fires.

“He died to sin ; he died to care ;
But for a moment felt the rod ;
Then, rising on the viewless air,
Spread his light wings, and soared to God.”

3. The death of your child is a benevolent event. If, as I have supposed, he would be a great sufferer, or a great sinner, it is benevolence to you, and also to him. His removal so early, is an evidence that God loves him, and is ready to save him from the snares of this vain and wicked world. If you should see him walking along, in unconscious mood, the bank of some dangerous steep, or into a nest of vipers, you would take him away. The impulse of your heart would be to save your son, and at the sacrifice of your life you would deliver him. God knows to what influence your offspring will be subject. He knows what chilling winds will blow upon them, and what physical and moral dangers lie in their path. Not in anger, nor in hatred, but out of the purest love, He sends some guardian spirit, gently and sweetly to strike off the fetters

of earth, untwine the arms of the infant from your neck, and bear it away in triumph to His own abode. Could parents reflect long enough to comprehend this sacred truth, much of the misery which is occasioned by the loss of children would be obviated. Many who are thus called to mourn, forget every thing but *their loss*. They lose sight of God, and heaven, and the welfare of the departed one, and fall down in despair, destitute of all the cheerful and comfortable assurances which God has given for such occasions. How natural, and yet how unwise this is! What sorrows! what clouds! what darkness! all in consequence of a neglect or an unwillingness to receive the precious truths of the Holy Scriptures. The benevolence of God does not shine out more clearly in the health and life of one of your children than in the death of the other. The two events are distinguished alike by infinite kindness and goodness, and dull and insensible to the sorrows of earth and the joys of heaven must be he who cannot say,

“’Tis better far, in childhood’s

Friendless years, ere sorrows come, and cares of earth
Enslave us, sweetly to fall asleep and
Wake in heaven.”

But it occurs to me that I may be arguing on premises which all will not admit, and may be told

that all the children who die would not probably grow up great sinners, or great sufferers, should they live. Well, admit this, and more than this. Admit that the son you mourn would, had he lived, grown up loved, honored, and happy. Admit that he might have been placed in the most fortunate earthly position, and what then? Is not heaven better than earth? The society of God better than the companionship of men? Removed from the highest earthly honors to the glories of heaven, is not death a glorious triumph?

I also anticipate the question which will arise in some minds; "If God is wise and benevolent in the removal of one of my children from poverty and sin, is He not unwise to leave the other here to suffer, and groan, and weep?" To this I simply reply, that God may have some work in heaven, some sinless mission for the one who is removed; and some work on earth, some mission here, for the one who is left. His purpose is deep, and beyond our comprehension, but hereafter it will shine out with beams of light and truth.

4. The death of your child is glorious. It will require no argument to prove that the dying infant is wafted up to glory. Any other idea would be abhorrent to reason and Revelation. The character of God, His plans and purposes, the teachings of the Saviour, and the great atonement, all are

pledged to the precious doctrine of infant salvation John, in the vision of Patmos, had a sublime view of an infant throng who, standing on Mount Sion, joined in the grand chorus of the redeemed, and shouted, "Glory to God, and the Lamb." And "I looked, and lo a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with Him a hundred, forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred, and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins; these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; these were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God."

This language applies to the multitudes of infants who enter heaven with songs of praise. If it was not designed to represent such, there is no class on earth or in heaven, as far as human knowledge goes, to whom it is applicable.

(1.) They sing a new song—a song which no man can learn—which none know but themselves : it is the song of innocence, swelling out from infant voices and echoing through the world above. (2.) They are redeemed from among men. They are not angels, nor celestial spirits. They belong to earth ; they have enjoyed the benefits of the atonement, and the grace of redemption. (3.) They are pure, and undefiled. To all the sins of men they are strangers. In their mouth is no guile ; and they stand before the throne of God without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Who are they ? Where on earth can such a class of persons be found ? To the army of infants and to them only, is such language applicable. It must refer to them, and to no others.

Hence, the glory which is in the death of children. They are changed in early life from corruption, and rise to celestial life and beauty. Transplanted they are, from the cold bosom and cheerless wilderness of earth to bloom and thrive in the paradise of God. And would you who have lost children bring them back again, to share this sinful, sorrowing life, with us ? Would you have them give up their harps of glory for the hammer, the anvil, and the spindle ? Would you have them lay down their crowns of honor and brightness to wear again the robes of earth, and to be sheltered from chills and blasts by the poor cov-

erings of man's device? Would you bring them back to weep, groan, sin, suffer, and die over again, upon the shores of time?

Would bereaved parents take this cheerful and encouraging view of God's dealings with their children, they would not so often mourn without hope. Would they, instead of looking down into the deep grave, where the cold, wet body lies, look upward to the bright world where the spirit lives and rejoices in light, their hearts would not feel such crushing weights; and instead of Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not, we should have Job saying, "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

"Thou'lt say, 'My first-born blessing,
It almost broke my heart
When thou wert forced to go;
And yet for thee I know
'Twas better to depart.

"God took thee in His mercy,
A lamb, untasked, untried;
He fought the fight for thee;
He won the victory,
And thou art sanctified.

"I look around, and see
The evil ways of men;

And, O, beloved child,
I'm more than reconciled
To thy departure then.

“The little hands that clasped me,
The innocent lips that pressed,
Would they have been as pure
Till now, as when of yore
I lulled thee on my breast?”

There is one reflection eminently suited to this subject. If nothing sinful enters heaven, we have reason to fear that some parents will be separated from their children in the world to come. If the weeping father and sorrowful mother would enter into that state, and place of purity, they must be washed, regenerated, and sanctified. They must repent and become as little children, or they can in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.

Do any who have buried children listen to my voice? Your little ones are safe on high—with God. They weep not, they suffer not, they sin not. Like the insect which you once saw in the chrysalid state, but which has changed its groveling form for one of beauty, so your child has broken the chrysalis of time, and spread his wings, and upward flown into the clear light and joyful liberty of heaven.

Prepare to follow, for the time is at hand. Seek righteousness and peace, from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Be ready to rejoice with your departed ones, to sing their songs, to share their pleasures, and inherit their estate, for day and night forever are they before the throne.

These consoling views which I have now presented, are not the cold deduction of stoicism, but the sublime view of faith. I am not unaware of the sorrow which the father feels, and the anguish which enters a mother's soul, when her babe is removed. The loss to these parents, and especially to the mother, is so great that human sympathy is almost vain, and they cling to the cold clay as if it were their all. One who has been called to part with children—a bereaved and sorrowing mother—writes upon this subject :

“No one feels the death of a child as a mother feels it. The father cannot realize it thus. True, there is a vacancy in his home and a heaviness in his heart. There is a chain of association that at set times comes round with its broken link ; there are memories of endearment, a keen sense of loss, a weeping over crushed hopes, and a pain of wounded affection. But the *mother* feels that one has been taken away who was still closer to her heart. Hers has been the office of constant ministration. Every gradation of feature developed before her eyes ; she

detected every new gleam of infant intelligence ; she heard the first utterance of every stammering word ; she was the refuge of its fears, the supply of its wants, and every task of affection wove a new link, and made dear to her its object. And when her child dies, a portion of her own life, as it were, dies with it. How can she give her darling up, with all these loving memories, these fond associations ? The timid hands that have so often taken hers in trust and love, how can she fold them on its sinless breast, and surrender them to the cold clasp of DEATH ? The feet whose wanderings **she** has watched so narrowly, how can she see them **straightened** to go down into the dark valley ? The head that she has pressed to her lips and bosom, that she has watched in peaceful slumber and in burning sickness, a hair of which she could not see harmed, O, *how* can she consign it to the dark chamber of the grave ? It was a gleam of sunshine and a voice of perpetual gladness in her home ; she had learned from it blessed lessons of simplicity, sincerity, purity, faith ; it had unsealed within her a gushing, never-ebbing tide of affection ; when suddenly it was taken away, and that home is left dark and silent, and to the vain and heart-rending aspiration, ‘ Shall that dear child never return again ? ’ there breaks in response, through the cold gray silence, ‘ Nevermore—O, *never more!* ’ The heart is like a forsaken mansion.

and that word goes echoing through its desolate chambers. And yet, fond mother!—"time brings such wondrous easing"—thou wilt in after years look back, with a not unpleasing sadness, even upon this scene of grief."

Listen, bereaved parents, and you will hear your children singing the song of paradise! Look, and you will see their heads crowned with glory! Instead of desponding, prepare to follow your loved ones to the home appointed for all the living. All are dying.

"Princes, this clay must be your bed,
In spite of all your powers ;
The tall, the wise, the rev'rend head,
Will lie as low as ours."

Prepare to go, and resign your children with more of submission and love than of sadness and misery. They go with joy. To every burst of grief they say :

"Father! the pearly gates unfold,
The sapphire walls, the streets of gold,
Are bursting on my sight ;
The Angel bands come singing down,
And one has got my starry crown,
And one my robe of white.

"Poising above on silvery wing,
They're waiting my freed soul to bring
To its new home above ;

There, folded to my Saviour's breast,
How sweet, how full will be my rest
Beneath His eye of love.

"Thou would'st not hold me longer here,
Though well I know that many a tear
For my dear sake will flow.
The morning dawns upon my sight.
How long, how dark has been the night!
Father! I go, I go."

CHAPTER VII.

DEATH OF A DAUGHTER.

The destruction that wasteth at noonday. *David.*

DEATH, viewed without reference to the victory of faith, is a terrible enemy. He is the common conqueror of mankind. The more we see of his dreadful dealings with our race, the more do we dread his approach and shun his presence. Merciless alike to tender youth and hoary age, he has filled society with lamentations, and clothed many a mourner in robes of sorrow. He has no pity for the widow—none for the orphan. His vocation is terrible destruction, and like a conqueror he rideth through the world, leaving his pathway wet with tears and dotted with graves. Each time he comes, it seems to be with the same relentless fury, dealing out to man the cup of bitterness and sorrow. He has no pity. Mothers have knelt before him, and plead for their children in vain; sisters have bowed at his iron throne, and with tearful eyes besought him to revoke the mandate which consigned a brother to the grave, in vain; whole churches, whole nations have been unable to soften

his heart of steel, or move him to one deed of mercy and compassion. Other conquerors have lived awhile and died. Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon, are all slumbering in their graves. For a short time their banners waved over defeated armies and prostrate empires. Victory followed them awhile, and gathered its cluster of blood-wet laurels around their heads. But the time of triumph was short. Soon they left the ranks of living men and joined the silent army of the dead. Music, soft and melodious—the solemn dirge, sounded over their graves, but they heard it not. Their dust has mingled with the meaner ashes of beggars and slaves. But death is not yet destroyed. Unlike human tyrants, he holds his sway from age to age, and the monuments of his conquests are found through all the progress of six thousand years. He entered with sacrilegious tread the garden of Eden, and following close in the track of human sin, marked our first parents as his victims. He has entered into a contest with the mightiest of our race. Patriarchs, prophets, kings, he has consigned to the shades of the sepulcher. In all forms, and under all circumstances, he has made his conquests. At midnight and midnoon he has invaded the cottage and the palace, and presented himself to the monarch and the subject. He desired to grapple with the Son of God, and on the summit of Cal

vary wrestled with that Mighty One, who came to abolish death, and seal up forever the mouth of the sepulcher, and destroy entirely the dominion and conquest of the grave.

Death does not come in the same form to all men. He varies his assaults, and to some appears under more awful circumstances than to others. To some he gives a death-bed around which horrors cluster—a lone death-bed, with no friend to watch beside it; a pillow smoothed by no kind hand; a grave over which no flower blooms, no willow waves, no bird sings. To others he comes while they are surrounded with friends, cuts them down at noon, and makes life itself dreadful before he calls his victim to leave so many pleasures. To one he comes on the wings of some dreadful plague, or in the sudden fury of some fearful accident. The victim has scarcely a moment to prepare to meet his God. Suddenly he is torn from all he loves in life, and without warning carried away to the land of spirits. So unexpectedly are some removed that they have no time to attend to the most trivial service. They may wish, but wish in vain, for a single day or hour to settle business, bid adieu to wife and child. The messenger of the grave will not wait. He lifts his hand, and unavailing are all remonstrances, tears, and prayers.

To others he comes in the flush and burning heat

of the fever, which fastens itself upon the system. boils in the blood, and destroys reason. Under its influence a single week is sufficient to bow the strongest form, and make the vigorous arm weak as infancy. You often see the muscular man, with his head erect, his broad chest heaving with exertion, his step firm and even, and his eye full of life, passing along your streets. On him as he moves, the fever lays its hand, and the work of ruin commences. His step falters as he nears his home, his eye loses its wonted fire, his limbs refuse to support him, and he totters to the bed, to exchange it only for the coffin. Yesterday his strong arm was capable of almost any toil, his mind was firm and steady; to-day the fever has wasted the body, and dethroned the intellect. To others death comes in the wasting, lingering consumption, and gives them days and months of weariness and sorrow. By most persons the consumption is dreaded as one of the most fearful diseases to which we are subject. It is called the scourge of our climate, and every year it carries hundreds to the grave. Not a few brave the fever, who tremble at the signs of this protracted disease, which is so prevalent in our community. Fathers and mothers fear other complaints but little, and look with the utmost anxiety upon the wasting cheeks and the pallid countenances of their children. But, though dreaded so universally, consumption has

much in it of consolatory blessing. Of all diseases, it is best calculated to bring out the better traits of human character and develop the graces of the Christian life. When death comes in the form of consumption, it is mercy compared with plague, fever, insanity, or sudden accident, and to one who is about to exchange worlds, it is well adapted to give the needful preparation. To many who have gone from your midst to the consumptive's grave, the disease has been a blessing in disguise, and many a parent can look back upon the sickness of a beloved child, who day by day wasted away, and finally fell into the arms of Jesus. This scourge of the climate becomes the mild and merciful discipline of God, to prepare the soul to enter upon the holy services of the upper temple. It accomplishes what fever and plague cannot, and leads the suffering disciple to sweet and calm submission to the will of God. Why then should consumption be so universally dreaded? It should not. Every step of its progress is mingled with mercy, and instead of being a sirocco which sweeps over human life, it is a merciful dispensation of Divine Providence, which announces death to man in the mildest way and with the kindest tone. This will be evident if we attend to the following considerations :

1. *Consumption gives time for reflection and thought* It comes on gradually. A cough—a sin-

gle pain—a headache—a heart-throb, are among the first indications. Weeks roll on, and another sign appears, and then another, and another. Friends become alarmed. They see unusual appearances in the countenance, and warn the victim. But their warnings are generally unheeded. The diseased one feels but little distress, and laughs to scorn the admonitions of the physician. Day by day the cheek loses its bloom—the cough increases—the body is deprived of its strength and vigor. Then comes the terrible conviction that death is near. Must I die? Must I be buried up in the cold ground? Must I bid farewell to father, mother, sister? Must I leave this bright world—these fair flowers—these warbling birds—this beautiful scenery? To all these questions, comes back the fearful answer alike from the graves of the departed and the homes of the living. For the consumptive there is but little hope of life. No medicine has yet been discovered to cure—no physician skillful to save. When once the disease has fastened itself upon the system, it knows no remedy—but death. Following the conviction, that death is at work, come days, weeks, and sometimes months of reflection. At such times and under such circumstances, the mind will wander forth to the future. The things of this world will lose their charm. Every thing below the skies becomes transitory and fleeting. Objects in which

delight has been taken, and in which life's hopes have centered, are divested of all their joy. What is the future? How will it be spent? are questions which press themselves upon the mind, and claim the attention. Am I prepared to die? will echo through the chambers of the soul, and find an answer there. Whole days and weeks will be employed in the momentous considerations; the long neglected Bible will be perused, and the soul, weary of its load of sorrow, will turn to Him who heareth the young ravens when they cry, and rest upon the Almighty arm for hope and comfort. It is not thus with any other disease. A few weeks, and oftentimes a few days, will terminate the fever, and little opportunity is given to prepare the mind for the fearful scenes of eternity. The soul is hurried away with awful haste. Death has no time to wait—no hours to spend in parley with the victim. He comes at once arrayed in terror and clothed with frowns. He strikes one fearful blow and all is over. The first symptoms are quickly followed by the funeral procession—the hearse—the coffin—the corpse. But little time is found to think or reflect; and the victim is locked in the cold embrace of death, ere he had remembered that he was likely to die.

But how different with the consumptive. He comes to the gates of the sepulcher with measured

tread. Far away in the distance he hears the trembling waters of the river of death. He must cross that stream, and explore the land beyond it. He knows—he feels the sublimity of the passage before him; and while his wasting body decays day by day, his soul gathers strength for the last awful voyage. While he who dies of fever or plague is like a man coming to the end of life at once, and dashing over a high precipice, with fearful plunge, into the gulf below, the consumptive resembles one descending a sloping plain, at the termination of which rolls a broad river. Almost imperceptible is his downward progress. The kind hand of sympathy plants sweet flowers in his way, and he descends to the grave with every token of friendship.

It is a fearful thing to be hurried into eternity—fearful to go with no time to call in the scattered thoughts, and center them on God—fearful to go and stand, with the warning of a few days only, in the midst of that august body which we shall find gathered around the throne of God. Time to prepare for death the consumption gives us. It sends its warning voice to admonish the thoughtless one, and lead to that contemplation of eternal things which will fit the soul to enter the presence of its Maker with shouts of triumph.

2. *Consumption is seldom, to any great extent, accompanied with pain.* A body racked and dis-

torted with pain but poorly qualifies one to contemplate, with any proper feeling, the realities of eternity. A consideration of the vast, untried future, demands all the powers of mind which we can summon to our aid. We need for such a view, no intellect impaired by the infirmities of the physical system—no heart overburdened with its own painful action. But you are reminded that most of the diseases to which men are subject, come attended with pain and sorrow. Sickness is universally dreaded, because it is so completely interwoven with physical distress. Indeed, in many cases of sickness, the poor sufferer has no thought of any thing else but his own torment. His head, his heart, his limbs, his flesh—all thrill with keen and indescribable agony. Enter the chamber of one on whose stout form the fever is doing its work of destruction. Wasted and wan you will see him tossing from side to side, and finding no rest. On his cheek is the hectic flush, and his wild eye seems starting from its socket. No proper place is that sick bed to prepare for death—no time is the dying hour to secure a fitness to meet God. The aching body is enough for one man's thoughts, and engrosses all the attention. It is almost impossible to rally the feelings and thoughts around the Cross, while the physical system is, like a wheel of knives, cutting upon itself; and few are the cases of conversion

which occur under such circumstances. Religion unsought until the pains of fever are on the system, is seldom sought or found at all. There is no fitness of time or place, and they who defer the subject until such a season, exhibit the most fearful folly and madness.

But consumption comes without pain. In all its early stages the victim suffers but little. Day by day the strength wastes away, the cheek becomes paler and the eye more languid, and but little physical distress is endured. So universal is the absence of pain, that most consumptive people suppose they are not diseased at all, and they will sometimes waste away without believing that death is at hand. Now this freedom from pain I conceive to be an inestimable blessing. Did consumption bring with it the suffering which usually attends the fever and the plague it would be indeed a scourge. If, month after month, life should be prolonged in agony, the disease would be a terrible evil—a fearful curse. But God, in His mercy, has otherwise ordained. To consumption He has given wasting and weakness, and made severer pain attendant upon those diseases which are soon terminated. No disease could be more favorable to religious improvement than the one under consideration. Sitting in the cushioned chair, or reclining on the pillow, the mind gives itself up to the thoughts

which naturally crowd upon it. Death and the grave—time and eternity—the fearful scenes of the judgment and future retribution pass in review. Just pain enough is felt to remind the sufferer that death may come, and lead away to the everlasting source of hope and comfort. God seems to allow consumption to lay its withering hand on many of His own people, that He may prove to a wicked world what the religion of Jesus can do for its possessors in hours of trial. He allows its ravages that He may prove the strength of faith, and the ardor of piety; that He may develop the Christian graces of His people, and, by His gentle dealings, lead the straying ones to the blood which purifies from all sin.

3. Consumption seldom dethrones the reason. The possession of intellect is essential to the service of God. When there is no reason, there is no religion. Piety has to do with the head as well as with the heart, and when the head is radically defective, the heart will cease its regular action. A man without reason is a pitiable object, and if on earth there is one who needs the sympathy of men, it is he whose mind has become shattered and overthrown. He presents the awful spectacle of a man in ruins—a man, created by God—endowed with intellect fitted for immortality, crushed, and blasted, and destroyed.

Now to destroy reason is the tendency of many prevalent diseases, and it is not unusual, when we enter the chamber of the sick man, to find him in a state of insanity, his reason gone, and he raving in delirium. Oftentimes insanity comes at the onset, and no time is given to guard against it. It is evident that no preparation can be made for death under the influence of disease in this form. The insane man will appreciate no argument, be affected by no appeal, touched by no persuasions. If he has left the salvation of his soul until such an hour, he must leave it forever. If he has neglected to secure an advocate for the last great trial, he will stand at the eternal bar with none to defend or plead his cause. Reason has fled, the mind is in ruin, and when madness takes its flight the poor sinner will be standing in the changeless world, a shivering outcast from the land of rest. But while insanity is frequently produced by other diseases, the consumptive always escapes it until the last stages, and the mind seldom loses its balance, or is dethroned. God, in His wisdom, has so ordained it, and this provision of His infinite knowledge is full of love and kindness to His poor, suffering, sorrowing creatures. Were it otherwise, how dreadful would consumption be? With what horror would it be invested? How would it be dreaded and feared by the human family? But instead of be-

coming weaker, the mind often grows stronger as the last scene of life draws near. Instead of mingling unintelligible sounds and words without meaning, as is sometimes the case in other diseases, the language of the consumptive is full of reason, truth, and piety. Instead of reaching out to grasp dim shadows which fancy pictures before the excited mind, the hand of the dying one is often laid upon the Cross; not in the madness of disease, but in the holy hope and confidence of the divine life.

4. *Consumption ends in Death.* Seldom is it cured. When once it is settled upon the system the victim may well prepare for death. This fact is known and acknowledged by all, and we expect this disease to end sooner or later in dissolution. To many minds, the terrible certainty which attends consumption is one of its darkest features. Not so does it appear to me. The very fact, that hope of long life has gone, is calculated to turn the mind away to the more substantial hopes of heaven. In ordinary diseases, hope of recovery continues as long as life lasts, and often does the sick man die while thinking about his body, and forming plans for the future, when he should be attending to the concerns of his undying soul. Sooner or later we must all die. If we are prepared, the sooner our turn comes the better it will be for us, and it seems to me that of all diseases to fit the heart, the con

sumption is the best. With the end of life all earthly ambition dies, and when the sepulcher appears in the distance, and we begin to realize that we shall soon enter it, we commence the work of preparation. The certainty of death, instead of driving us to despair, leads us, guides us, forces us to the throne of the Eternal, there to lie until the wave of sorrow shall have passed over.

Thoughts like these which I have now presented, have been suggested by the melancholy death of one of the younger members of this congregation, who, by the malady which we have discussed, was called, on Thursday last, to try the realities of eternity. In speaking of her death, I do not wish to forget that the pulpit is designed to show forth the praise of God, and not to eulogize any human being. I do not forget, that however much these friends may mourn their deceased child and sister, however fondly they may cherish her memory, on no ears would grate with more harshness, any attempt to exalt the virtues of her life, or over-estimate the glories of her death, than on theirs. The object of this discourse is to benefit the living—to lead this great crowd of human beings to such a preparation for death as will enable them to meet the monster with composure. The same path which she trod, we are to follow; the same dark, deep, rolling river which she entered, we are to

cross; the same awful, unknown, and eternal future, into which her weary spirit pursued its way, upon the pilgrimage of ages, we are to explore. Our young friend was born in September, 1836. Her parents, brothers, and sisters are now with us, and you know them all. Beneath the very shadow of our temple she has lived and died. Her earlier years were marked by nothing which claims a place in a religious discourse. She was a kind sister, an affectionate and obedient child, and a faithful friend. During the last summer her health began to fail, and signs of disease presented themselves. Long before they dared to announce it to their child, the parents saw her cheek fade, and her strength depart. Week after week they hoped for better things. Skillful physicians were employed, and new medicines used, but they were all in vain. The disease had entered the system, and was determined on conquest. Soon it became apparent that death was approaching, and the awful fact was announced to the sufferer. At first she could not believe it. So few were her pains of body that she imagined her friends unduly alarmed, and strove to allay their fears. While doing this, death was at work upon her system, and ere long she, herself, was compelled to believe that she was soon to die. The conviction came to her soul with terrible forebodings. Death was an event for which

she had made no preparation. Though called by God many times, she had thus far refused to listen to His voice, or heed His friendly remonstrance. Like many others, she had cultivated an amiable disposition, and neglected the one thing needful, and in that other world to which she was hastening, had laid up no treasure, had secured no Friend. In her own home, on her cushioned chair, she sat day after day in silent thoughtfulness, pondering the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" Unknown to any of her friends, a terrible source of anguish was creeping into her mind. Long did she conceal her feelings from those around her. Not a single word escaped her lips by which the condition of her mind could be discovered, and in silence and alone she bore the heavy load. Her exercises of mind were not the results of any sudden fears, but the deep, all-powerful movings of the Holy Ghost. She felt that she was a sinner—that she had never appealed to God for pardon through His Son Jesus Christ—that she had no title to a mansion in the skies. Well did the cough, the increasing weakness and debility, teach her that she had not long to live. To die she was not ready, and hence in all the anguish of a soul just separating from the body, she determined to be reconciled to God. While thus out of Christ, her pious friends could give her but little encour-

agement. The minister, the parents, all felt that it would be worse than cruelty to blind her eyes at such a moment; to deceive her in regard to her real condition. She was going to her God, and had no hope, and they could only point her to "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." She lived awhile in this condition, until she came to the determination to submit at once to God. She found that all earthly dependence was vain—all earthly hope futile, and her weary spirit turned away to God for life and salvation.

We trust her sins were forgiven on the first Sabbath of the present month. The day previous had been one of mental anxiety and disquietude, and with an earnestness which equalled the necessity of the case, she had sought the Divine favor. She went to her pillow that night with a heart almost bursting with grief. Dark heavy clouds hung over her, and she closed her eyes upon the gathering wrath. Sabbath came, a calm, beautiful day; and with the Sabbath came peace and resignation. The torturing fears and doubts which had oppressed her mind before were gone. A strange unusual feeling came upon her. Still she did not possess that faith in Christ which is necessary to give hope and comfort, still she lingered about the gates of the city of Destruction, fearful to break away and fall into the arms of Christ. On the following Thursday, God

was pleased to show His face ; the dark clouds were driven away ; the gloom was dissipated—a light brighter than the sun broke in upon her soul—and she was free. To a question put by her father, in regard to her feelings, she replied, while she burst into a flood of tears : “ I am so happy that I cannot tell you how I feel.” She seemed to be as Bunyan’s Christian pilgrim was, when he came to the Cross and looked upon it, and found his heavy burden loosed from his shoulders, and tumbling from his weary back into the sepulcher. The heavy, torturing load which she had borne for weeks had fallen. By faith she had fixed her eye upon the Cross ; Christ had become to her the hope of glory ; she was a new creature ; old things were passed away, and all things had become new. She wished now to sing. Tears, sadness, sighs, had taken their departure, and hope reigned within the temple of her soul. One or two of the members of the church came to sing with her. Unable herself to join, she lifted up her heart, and her redeemed spirit mingled in the song. They sang :

“ Religion is a glorious treasure,

The purchase of a Saviour’s blood .

It fills the mind with consolation,

It lifts the heart to things above ;

“It calms our fears, it soothes our sorrows,
It smoothes our way o’er life’s rough sea ;
’Tis mixed with goodness, meekness, patience—
This heavenly portion mine shall be.”

This, and other verses, expressive of the feelings of a pious heart, were sung, in which she seemed to take delight. In the following hymn she found sweet satisfaction :

“Jesus, my all, to Heaven is gone
He whom I fix my hopes upon
His track I see, and I’ll pursue
The narrow way till Him I view.

“Lo ! glad I come, and thou, blest Lamb,
Shalt take me to thee, whose I am :
Nothing but sin have I to give,
Nothing but love shall I receive.”

In a happy frame of mind, clouded by an occasional doubt, which, like the vapors of the air, which sometimes hide the sun, but do not put it out, she continued one week. On Thursday morning last I was summoned to her bed-side, to see her die. Around her pillow were congregated a company of mourners, on whose countenances, grief was written in visible characters. I felt—we all felt that human aid was vain, and all that remained for us was prayer. And pray we did. From many a

heart in that chamber went up the silent but heart-felt supplication, "Lord Jesus, receive her spirit." Almost an hour before she died, she beckoned to her father, who stood beside her. As he leaned over her, she whispered, "I am happy. I am ready to depart—I thought I was gone once, but my spirit has returned to this world again." To the question, is Christ precious? she replied quickly, "O yes, yes." At thirty minutes after twelve o'clock she died; sweetly as a child falls asleep she departed. Amid our silent prayers, as we stood around her, her spirit ascended to the God who gave it, and brothers and sisters stood weeping over nothing but the clay-cold corpse. Just before she died, the world seemed to recede from her view, and ere she ceased to breathe, her spirit seemed to be beyond its influence. "I see Him, I see Him," was her triumphant expression, as her dim eye lost sight of father, mother, brother, sister, and became fixed alone on Christ. "I see Him—I see Him." Yes, sainted one, thou dost see Him, every pang He has taken from thy beating heart—every tear He has wiped from thy weeping eyes. Yes, thou dost see Him! Thine eye is not dim now with the film of death—no vail hides His shining form. Gaze on Him, departed disciple—gaze on Him to all eternity.

Yesterday she was buried. At early morn we

assembled around her coffin. A large number of sympathizing friends congregated together. An aged man, with trembling tone, sang the hymn commencing,

“Life is the time to serve the Lord;
The time to ensure the great reward.”

The minister commended the mourners and the people to the care of God, and then the procession moved away on its mournful mission. To a distant tomb they bore the body, and amid tears and sighs, laid it down to sleep until the morning of the resurrection, and the last sad office was performed. Now she slumbers, disturbed not by the wintry blast which sweeps over the field of graves—unstained by sin, and unterrified by any of the assaults of foes. And who on earth would wish to summon her again to this world of sin? Who would have her exchange her harp of gold, her crown of glory, her robe of righteousness, for the employments and sorrows of this world? Who would disturb her song of glory, which to-day is swelling out with angel anthems, and coming up before God with acceptance? No, let no murmuring thought find its way up to her pure abode—let her body repose in peace beneath the bosom of the earth, and her spirit live eternally in heaven.

“Sister, rest from sin and sorrow,
Death is o’er, and life is won;
On thy slumber dawns no morrow.
Rest; thine earthly race is run.”

“Fare thee well; though wo is blending
With the tones of earthly love,
Triumph high, and joy unending,
Wait thee in the realms above.”

The parents of our deceased friend have met with a severe trial. Many times, they have gone to the grave, to deposit there the cold remains of the fondly loved and early lost. They have known how sad a thing it is to drink the cup of sorrow and bereavement, and now are called to lay a new sacrifice upon the altar of Christian submission. But how many evidences of mercy and goodness cluster around even this severe dispensation. God has mingled joy with the sorrow, and in the midst of judgment has remembered mercy. Had their child gone to the grave, a stranger to the hope of heaven, had she died without a trust in the love of Christ, had she closed her eyes in the last, long, dreamless sleep, without a view of Him whose smile is life, with what feelings of sadness would they have bewailed her early fall. Had such been the case, they would have followed her to the sepulcher distressed with grief and sorrow. But God called after His stray-

ing child— at the eleventh hour He forgave her sins, took away all fear of death, and spoiled the victory of the grave. They saw the chamber in which their suffering daughter died become the scene of brilliant conquest—they saw death conquered and subdued by the faith of her who now slumbers in the darkness of the tomb. And shall they mourn? yes, they may; Christ wept at the grave of His friend, and poured His tears of sorrow there; and when our loved ones depart, tears are the appropriate testimonials of our affection.

The brothers and sisters are admonished by this sad and awful stroke of providence. Not long ago their sister's cheek beamed with the roseate hue of health. Vigorous and strong she moved forward to her daily duties, with the prospect of death far away in the distance. But a change has occurred, which they can, as yet, scarcely realize. Day by day they will feel it more and more. They will go home from this house to-day to see her vacant chair, her deserted place at the table, her books, and the garments which she has been accustomed to wear. And will they heed this admonition? Will they listen to the voice of God? Will they prepare for that event which cometh alike to all? That tomb in which you laid your sister's form is not yet full. Within its shades stands a grim monster who is calling for other victims, and soon will pronounce

your names. To lie thus low, and pale, and cold; are you ready?

To the young people of this whole congregation, the warning comes in thunder tones, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." But a few days since, one of your number came to the sanctuary, as you have come to-day, in all the vigor and buoyancy of youth. Now, while you are listening to the services of this hour, she is slumbering beneath the surface of the earth; her pale form reposes there in the silence of a dreamless sleep. How long, think you, it will be ere another, and another, and another, of this throng shall depart on the same sad journey, and lie as low, and as pale, and as cold? How long, think you, ere all who are now assembled within these walls, and who are moving to the close of human life, shall descend on the lone pilgrimage of death to find shelter from the storms and tempests of this world in the oblivion of the grave? Not long! The race of man is one long procession, marching to the tomb. The front rank has to-day entered the dark portals, to-morrow another rank will disappear, and every day of life will hide from human gaze a crowd of men and women who are changing time for eternity. In this discourse I have described death as a horrid monster, who comes to break up family circles, to sever the fondest

earthly connections, and rend the ties which bind parent to child, husband to wife, brother to sister. I have spoken of death as a conqueror, moving in terrible majesty, swaying an iron scepter, and reeking in human blood. But thanks be to God, death is not supreme, his power is not infinite, his reign is not eternal. By faith in Christ, the potent weapon of the Christian, the believer is enabled to triumph over this most terrible of conquerors, and spoil the victory and dominion of the grave. Christ has become, to all who trust in Him, "the resurrection and the life." He has placed in the grave an everlasting light, which streams its radiance far and wide along the shores of eternity. He has dispelled the clouds which hang over the mouth of the sepulcher, and placed a brightness there which encircles the dying Christian with a halo of glory. Supported by Him, we have seen our young sister, whose death we have attempted to improve to our spiritual benefit, walk unterrified amid the shadows which gather over the last awful boundary of life, and triumph while she died. If called soon to exchange worlds and pass away to the bar of the Infinite, would your death resemble hers? As your eye grew dim, and your voice failed, and your heart ceased to beat, would the vision of your soul extend far beyond the veil, and discerning Christ standing

by the throne of God, lead you to exclaim with holy pleasure, "I see Him, I see Him."

Faith in God removes all the terror, and fear, and sorrow of the tomb, and makes the grim monster a friend to help us on the passage to eternal life. Will you secure that faith, and be prepared for death, ready to meet the tyrant whether he comes in dreadful plague, in burning fever, or in the long wasting consumption, which is emphatically "the destruction which wasteth at noonday"?

"Death is the crown of life;
Were death denied, poor man would live in vain.
Death wounds to cure; we fall, we rise, we reign,
Spring from our fetters, hasten to the skies.
When blooming Eden gathers on our sight,
The king of terrors is the prince of peace."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HEAVENLY RECOGNITION.

For now we see through a glass darkly ; but then face to face. *Paul.*

THAT the dead will rise from the grave, and live in a future world, is by most persons acknowledged. When a friend departs, this precious truth is applied to the consolation of those that remain, and becomes a balm of healing to many a crushed and wounded heart. There was a moment when one of the nations of the earth, in the mad delirium of depravity, attempted to blot out this doctrine and rob man of the comfort which it affords. "Death is an eternal sleep," was written on the gravestone, and recorded over the gates of cemeteries, and a cheerless infidelity took the place of an enlightened and soul-inspiring faith. Some few in this land are so lost to all that is human and divine, that they deny a future state, while the evidences are as positive as any of the facts of history. But man universally is looking out for something hereafter ; to a future world, where that which is in part shall be done away. The good and the bad alike are conscious of a principle within which is struggling against the flesh and aspiring to a greater knowledge

and to a nobler being. It is the effort of the soul to burst its chains, and fly away and measure the vast and infinite unknown.

But while a future existence is believed, the precise mode of that existence is not so clearly ascertained. While the fact that our departed friends shall live after death is readily received, the questions, shall we live with them? shall we know them? are not so easily answered. To prove that we shall recognize our departed friends in a future world, and to apply to afflicted mourners the comfort to be derived from the fact, is the object of the present article.

1. I argue it from the character and nature of the resurrection. We are very clearly given to understand that we shall be raised *personally*. We are not to lose our identity, but are to be raised up, the same individuals that we died. We shall comprehend every change which has taken place in us, and our relations to earth instead of being forgotten, will be more clearly discerned and understood. Unless this be the case, virtue can have no reward, and vice can have no punishment. The great idea of a future judgment derives its force and significance from the fact that every man will know himself, and be sensible of his past conduct. The drunkard will remember his debauch; the Sabbath-breaker will remember his

profanation of holy time ; the benevolent man will recall his acts of charity, and in himself receive his reward. The sinner will not find himself to be the fragment of a race, and answerable for the sins of that race. The just man will not lose himself in the great aggregate of virtue, and be rewarded because in the world there was so much of good. The one will bear his own sins ; the other will be rewarded for his own virtues. And if we know ourselves, and are perfectly conscious of our errors and virtues, shall we not also know those who shared those deeds ? If the sinner can remember the Sabbath when he dared profane the holy hours consecrated to the service of heaven ; if he can know where he was, and what his faults were, must he not also know who shared his guilt, and with him is to enter into suffering ? If a man is conscious of having defrauded his neighbor, must he not know that neighbor, and with the crime must there not be the remembrance of the person ? If a Christian gave to a poor widow an armful of wood, or a loaf of bread, or a sum of money, and the act comes up clearly and distinctly, will it not be indissolubly connected with the memory of the widow herself ? A writer on this subject says : “ If we are to be conscious of the acts of our former existence, if we are to remember our conduct while we were on earth, we must likewise re-

member those among whom we had our conversation ; those who, in a great measure, made our conduct what it was. Our duties, virtues, sins, vices, arise almost altogether from the relations of society. We cannot remember the one, without calling to mind the other. They are inseparably united, and the imagination cannot disjoin them. If I should remember that I had done a particular injury on earth, I must remember him whom I injured. If I should remember that I had performed a particular act of benevolence, I must remember the person whom I assisted. How much more should I remember, in the review of my life, those with whom I had been connected in the daily and most intimate intercourse of life ; those who had exercised the most efficacious influence, in the formation of my character ; those who had called forth, and gained, and kept the best affections of my heart. The recollection of my former self and my former associates, must be produced together, and from the same principle. If the one be evident, the other is so too."

Now if one person be recognized in heaven, all must be. If we are so constituted in the future world that we can recognize a person with whom we have committed crime, or to whom we have done an act of kindness, we must be so constituted as to recognize all our friends. The more deeply

and fondly we have loved them here, the more readily we shall know them there, for here we see through a glass darkly, but there face to face.

2. I argue this doctrine from the employments of heaven. These are such as to require a knowledge, and consequently a recognition of each other. The saved are represented as uniting in one song, in praise of one person at one time. Their harmonious anthems rise together, and swell out in a full, deep chorus of praise to God and the Lamb. They recognize Christ in order to praise, and it seems to me to be an essential part of harmony that they should know and understand each other. As far as we have any knowledge, Christ appears in heaven with such a body as we shall have after we are raised. If we can recognize Him, why not all who are like Christ, for in His likeness are we all to appear who wait for His coming.

The language in which praise is offered to God and the Lamb implies this very strongly. Not one of all the thousands, and tens of thousands who stand before the throne night and day, ever intimates that he is alone. His song is a constant recognition of a great company who join in the same hallowed strain. Not "I," but "we;" not "me," but "us," is the phraseology employed on every occasion, and each seems to have the fullest knowledge of, and fellowship with those who are

around him. From all those delightful services of heaven, given by John, we can gather no other idea, and all he saw must have been an illusion if the saints in glory do not recognize each other.

3. I argue this doctrine from the fact that angels and departed spirits recognize those who remain on earth. At one time they are represented as ministering spirits, sent forth to comfort those who are heirs of salvation, hovering over the earth, and whispering words of peace and comfort to those who are in sorrow. At another time they are represented as assembled on high, and rejoicing over the conversion of the sinner, and the reformation of an outcast. Now they are leading out some Lot from the devoted city, and then shutting the mouths of the lions that they may not harm the servant of God. Now they walk with the martyrs through the fiery furnace, and then visit them in prison and strike off their chains. Now if the dead know us, why may they not know each other? If they now, on viewless wings, may hover over the world to comfort those that mourn, and do God's will among His children here, why may they not know us after we have arrived in paradise and tuned our harps by theirs. There also seems to be a moral necessity that those who have seen our degradation, and heard our groans, should see our exaltation and our glory; that after

having comforted us in our sorrow, they should share our praises.

4. There have been instances in which inhabitants of the earth have recognized not only angels, but departed saints. Angelic visits were frequent under the Old Testament dispensation; and clear, safe, certain visions of saints and angels have been given under the New Economy. But at the transfiguration of Christ, Peter and his associates saw Moses and Elias in shining raiment. For awhile they held communion, the saints of earth and the saints of heaven. The theme upon which they conversed has been handed down to us, and their amazement and joy described to us. This was not a vision, but an actual interview, and Moses and Elias were as surely present as were Peter and his Lord. We have in this fact a strong confirmation of our doctrine, for Moses and Elias doubtless appeared in the same form, and wearing the same garments as they possess to-day, and will possess when we are called to sit down with them in the kingdom of heaven. This interview between the disciples and Moses and Elias, is an incontrovertible source of proof, and no description of the appearance of the saints in glory, could give us a clearer idea of their state than we find in the gospel account of the transfiguration of Christ. The bodies which these two persons had were like the

body which Christ had after His resurrection, and in which He ascended to heaven, and in which, doubtless, He now lives, and will continue to live, as long as He is the head and pattern of His saints.

5. The interview held between Abraham and Dives confirms the truth of our doctrine. These two departed persons saw and recognized each other, though between them there was a great gulf fixed. Christ doubtless designed to represent the condition of men after death, and He never would have used such a parable, or given utterance to such a narrative, if there were not between the spirits of the departed a conscious connection and intercourse. As the rich man looked, he saw Abraham with Lazarus in his bosom. He was in abject misery. His tongue was hot and parched with his continual outcries, and he represents his torment as "a flame." "Father Abraham," he said, "send Lazarus, that he may dip his finger in water." Abraham replied, and gave the reason why the request could not be complied with. Thus between a saint in bliss, and a lost soul in woe, there was not only a recognition but a conversation. And if these could recognize each other, and Lazarus could know Abraham, and rest upon his bosom, I am at a loss to know why we all may not see and know those whom we loved on earth, and who are awaiting our entry into heaven.

6. I argue the same fact from the general representations of Scripture, that we shall see and know all things hereafter. Our vision is to be enlarged, our knowledge much increased, our views of celestial things unbounded, in a word, we are to be like Christ. This knowledge must comprehend persons as well as things. That would be but a partial illumination which would enable us to know that our friends were happy with the Lord, but would not enable us to recognize them, while they were standing by our side, and singing the same song. It seems absolutely essential that we should recognize our friends in the future, in order to the attainment of that full complete knowledge, to which we are permitted to aspire. Much of the knowledge of things must be included in, and indissolubly connected with a knowledge of persons, and before we can comprehend all that wisdom and knowledge which will be the portion of the just, we must enter into fellowship with those who have been removed from earth to rewards on high. No partial and limited knowledge could fill the broad and comprehensive promises of complete illumination which have been given, and the fulfillment of which is reserved to every saint.

7. We are referred to specific cases in which men divinely inspired have looked forward with joy to a reunion with their departed kindred. The soul of

Job was stayed upon this doctrine. It was a support and comfort to him when his children were falling one by one into the grave. It was this that covered David's face with smiles instead of tears when his child was removed to a world from which the traveler does not return. Paul seemed to have this view and on no other principle can some of his assertions be explained. The same thing is implied in the promises made to Martha in Bethany, that her brother should rise again. If she should not see him and know him, his resurrection could be but a poor solace for her afflictions. Christ doubtless intended to teach her that she should see him, that they should be reunited, as clearly as He did the bare fact of his resurrection. The language of Jesus cannot be limited to that one occasion, or that one person, and the bringing up of Lazarus, and his restoration to his friends, was a proof and pledge that He who is the resurrection and the life, will at last reunite all who love Him, in an eternal meeting.

8. There is an instinctive conviction that our departed friends will be known to us hereafter. I know that no argument can be built upon so narrow a foundation, and yet if it is not the teaching of nature and reason, I understand not why in every man's mind is this looking to, and expectation of, a union after death. There seem to be

some doctrines which are intuitive. The mind naturally goes out after them. The idea of God is one: the future state is another: the immortality of the soul is a third. The doctrine which I am endeavoring to establish seems to me to come into this category. The teacher of it is within man, and I think he might learn it, imperfectly perhaps, without a written revelation. The mother who loves her child believes that she shall see his little form again. Nobody has told her so; it looks improbable, and she could not prove it if she should try. But she believes it; sophistry and argument to the averse could not convince her of her mistake; she *feels* it, as she *feels* there is a God; she believes it, as she believes in a resurrection. There is a revelation in her own heart, to which her whole being responds.

9. It will also be observed that the passages of Scripture which are given for the comfort of mourners must be based on this doctrine. None of these passages intimate that the dead shall come back to this life, or that we shall escape from the messenger of the grave. They all bend forward to a period in the future, and gather around the hour when the losses we have sustained shall be repaired. There would be some comfort in knowing where our friends were, and how they were employed, but there would be a sting to death, and a

victory to the grave, if no reunion among the righteous were to take place hereafter. The Scriptures would lose much of their power to assuage the grief of bereaved friends, and lift up the troubled heart of sorrow, if this heavenly truth should be blotted out. They would be destitute of much of that efficacy to console and comfort, which now make them the best mourner's book which can be read.

In conclusion, I remark, this doctrine is calculated to give comfort to every disciple of Christ. It assures us that the separation from friends which was so much mourned and lamented, is to be a brief and temporary one. The voices which once fell on the ear will be heard again, though now hushed in death. The countenances we once loved, we shall love again, when they beam with immortal youth, and glow with the love of heaven, though now they are decayed in the grave. The Christian will meet and recognize in heaven the old worthies of the patriarchal dispensation, who have come with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to rejoice before God. He shall see David, whose harp once made sweet melody on earth, but which is now attuned to the bliss of heaven. He will see the king who reigned in wisdom, but whose head now wears a more dazzling crown than that which decorated his brow, when the queen of Sheba came to pay her homage at his feet. He will find the wailing Jere

miah, whose doleful lamentations we read, as a mournful evidence of his sad feelings over the sins of men. He will meet with Daniel, who "went up through a den of lions, safe in the promised land." He will gaze upon the countenances of the three Hebrew worthies who braved the wrath of a proud king, dared the vengeance of a fiery furnace, walked through the seven-fold heat, and emerged to be received with great honor. He will see the Evangelists, whose works he has read with such delight, and whose simple narratives have been the food of his soul while in this world. He will find Paul there, surrounded by a Gentile throng who have been saved through his influence. Nor will he find them alone. Every age has sent some to swell the anthem of the redeemed, and there, in that joyful world, will the Christian find those friends who have gone up from love, faith, and labor here, to shout high praises above.

His own loved children, and all who have died in faith, will the true disciple find above. His joy will know no measure as he folds to his arms those whom he knew and loved below. His heaven will be complete when the saints, his own family, and Christ himself, he finds all safe in heaven :

"These glorious minds, how bright they shine ;
'Whence all their bright array ?

How came they to the happy seats
Of everlasting day ?

“ From torturing pains to endless joys
On fiery wheels they rode,
And strangely wash'd their raiment white
In Jesus' dying blood.

“ Now they approach a spotless God,
And bow before His throne ;
Their warbling harps and sacred songs
Adore the Holy One.

“ The unvail'd glories of His face
Among His saints reside,
While the rich treasure of His grace
Sees all their wants supplied.”

But the recognitions of the future will be painful to some. Those who go from earth unprepared for heaven, will meet their former friends with terrible anguish. To say nothing of the pain which the husband must feel to see his wife, or the father his child, entering heaven, and he shut out, what sorrow will arise in the soul as the sinner recognizes, before the great white throne, the object of his wrong, or the companions of his guilt. The robber will recognize the man whom he robbed. The murderer will meet his victim. The unfaithful parent will meet his child. The unfaithful minister will find his congregation, which, through

him, has been lulled to a false security; and all men will meet the Saviour, who bled for them, but who by so many has been so cruelly rejected.

The recognitions of eternity will be full of holy pleasure, or of deep and aggravated misery to every one of us, and it becomes with us a question of no small solicitude as to where we shall meet, and with whom we shall live forever. Shall we, as the veil of the unknown is drawn up before us, recognize those who have loved or hated Christ? those whose characters are pure, or impure? who have been our companions in sin and degradation, or our associates in the service of God?

Oh, let us prepare to meet the righteous, and live with them. Let us, by humble faith in Christ, and holy love to all our fellow-men, be ready to enter, with a glorified assembly, into the presence and the praise of God. Then shall we recognize, not the vile and abandoned, but the pure and lovely, who have washed their robes, and gone up to dwell with Christ. Take courage, afflicted father, you will see your son again; mother, you will find your daughter there; brother, your sister will recognize you as you enter heaven; sister, your brother shall rise again, and you will know him.

“There shall the followers of the Lamb

Join in immortal songs;

And endless honors to His name

Employ their tuneful tongues.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRIPLE CROWN.

And they had on their heads crowns of gold. *Revelation.*

THE world is much indebted to the persecutions of Christians, and the malice of wicked men toward the people of God.

Out of the fiery furnace have come some of the richest legacies which martyrs ever bequeathed to a sinning, suffering world. The imprisonment of John Bunyan, a poor, despised disciple of a dishonored Master, in Bedford Jail, was the means of bringing out the "Pilgrim's Progress," a work which has done more to cheer the saints, and encourage men under the different phases of Christian experience than perhaps any book, the Bible alone excepted. The malice of the enemies of religion toward Calvin gave vigor to his years, and many of the doctrines of his Institutes were unfolded to him in answer to the prayer offered in a time of trial. The confinement of John on the lone Ægean rock, has furnished us with the Revelation, a revered book, now surrounded with perplexities and mysteries, but hereafter to be opened, explored, and fulfilled. Malice overreached itself, and the wrath

of man was made to praise the Lord of Hosts. In the vision of Patmos, John had many cheering views of the future glory of the saints. He saw them lifted from trials and tribulations here, to infinite joy and peace at God's right hand. Among other honors which he saw paid to them was the conferring of crowns, which they wore with dignity, or cast at the feet of Jesus. Such a crown now decorates the head of every saint in glory, and will decorate the head of every one who shall go up from this world to swell the chorus of the redeemed. Will such a crown be yours? If so, happy are you.

1. It will be a crown of *righteousness*. The saint will not wear it as a usurper. He will not appear in heaven with a diadem which does not belong to him. By a union with Christ, the disciple is brought into sonship with God, and shares with Christ the royal honors of His father's empire. Many of the crowns which have been worn by earthly monarchs have been stolen from other heads, and worn only by the right which might gives. But all through eternity the saint will feel that his crown is his right, through his sublime faith in Him who is the Head over all things. I do not mean that the Christian will claim a crown in heaven on the basis of his own merits. No, these are too few and worthless, and with these alone he would rather hide his head in the dust, than lift it up before God. The

righteousness which he claims is that which Christ wrought out, and which faith has transferred to him. It is a perfect righteousness which needs no amendment, but will shine brighter and brighter as eternal ages roll away.

Nor will any one dispute the right and title of the Christian to his crown. The crowns which monarchs wear are often made matter of dispute. Nations are convulsed, armies are arrayed, and scenes of dreadful bloodshed and crime are witnessed. But the Christian's crown was won without a single drop of blood being shed by hostile armies, and it will be retained without military assistance; it was secured without fraud, and it will be worn without injustice. It will be rusted by no widows' tears and orphans' blood; it will have no inscriptions of revenge or hate; it will be menaced with no frowns and reproaches; it will merit no scorn and contempt; it will never be stricken off or taken away. Such a crown will decorate the head of every child of God, as he appears in glory and takes his high position before God. Whatever may have been his earthly condition, beggar or slave, he will secure his royal honors from hands which never give in vain. This enables him to go through the river of death shouting, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of *righteousness*, which God, the Judge, shall give me in the presence of all my foes.

2. It will be a crown of *possessions*. Many a head has worn a crown, but possessed no kingdom. The one is not always a sure indication of the other. But the crown which will adorn the head of the saint in glory will have engraven deeply upon it, a title to infinite riches and unfading honors. It will give him *happiness*. Deprived of this to a great extent while walking amid the sorrows of earth, he will receive it in the future state. The heart which once beat with anguish, and the life which was once encompassed with evils, now find perfect peace. A flood of holy love flows into the soul, and the raptured saint has as much delight as his expanding soul can bear. He has sung, while a wanderer here below,

“There is an hour of peaceful rest,
To mourning wanderers given ;
There is a joy for souls distressed,
A balm for every wounded breast ;
’Tis found alone in heaven.”

He sings this no more, for the bliss of heaven is realized, and the last sorrow has been removed from him.

It gives *knowledge*. What does man know while in the flesh ? How narrow his vision ! How bounded his perception ! But death introduces him into the empire of knowledge, and unfolds to

him all that angels know and feel. He passes from a region where all is shadowy and cloudy, to intense and dazzling brightness. New heights he climbs : new depths he explores : new fields are ranged, and new wonders are found. His imperfect knowledge is done away, and he comprehends that which in the flesh he never conceived.

It gives *honor*. Wherever the Christian's head, encircled with his crown, appears, it is covered with glory. The heavenly hosts honor the ransomed disciple. The angels look upon him with respect, and mingle his name in their songs. They see in him a child of God ; in his countenance they recognize the lineaments of Christ ; on his head is a crown which the righteous Judge has given him. They do not worship him, but they honor him as a member of Christ, and love him as a child of God, and rejoice over him as a trophy of victorious grace.

It gives *purity*. It denotes exalted holiness. It contains a mystic charm to guard the possessor from all temptation and sin. There was a time when the Christian could sin ; when he did sin ; when his life was marred and spotted with transgressions. That time has passed away, and he sins no more. The crown upon his head shines with real and unaffected excellence—it is a crown of righteousness. Whoever sees it, hails its wearer as a redeemed man, a ransomed man—a man

cleared from all the claims of law, and justified before God. Like the elect angels he was on probation once, but like them he is now in a state of fixed and permanent holiness. There is no fear of fall; the crown can never be stricken from his head: God's character, government, and law, are pledged to keep it there, and sustain the Christian forever.

In a word, the Christian's crown gives him all he wants, all he asks for, and all he can think about. No wish is left unsatisfied; all things he is entitled to, for all things are Christ's, and Christ is God's. The mines of love, pure joy, wisdom, purity, and gladness which it opens before him, are deep and inexhaustible.

3. It will be a crown of *life*. No head wears a crown long on earth. Death strikes it off, and lays its wearer low in the grave. But the crown which the Christian will wear in heaven, will confer upon its possessor perpetual life. It was given for life, and will be worn through life—an endless life.

What a prospect is here before the Christian? what a glorious vision of heavenly blessedness? how consoling under trials? how elevating to our faith? how must it reconcile us to the departure of friends, who are given to us awhile, that we may give them back to God. The parent can lose his child with the prospect of heaven before him.

the mother can bury her daughter, and dream of her as a harping spirit, a sweet angel of life and glory.

“We have read of a young mother who had newly buried her first-born. Her pastor went to visit her, and on finding her sweetly resigned, he asked her how she attained such resignation? She replied; ‘I used to think of my boy continually—whether sleeping or waking; to me he seemed more beautiful than either children. I was disappointed if visitors omitted to praise his eyes, or his curls, or the robes I wrought for him with my needle. At first I believed it the natural current of a mother’s love. Then I feared it was pride, and sought to humble myself before Him who resisteth the proud. One night, in my dreams, I thought an angel stood beside me, and said: ‘Where is the little bud thou nursest in thy bosom? I am sent to take it away. Where is the little harp? Give it to me! It is like those which sound the praise of God in heaven.’ I awoke in tears; my beautiful babe dropped like a bud which the worm pierced; his last wailings was like the shattered harp-strings; all my world seemed gone; still in my agony I listened, for there was a voice in my soul, like the voice of the angel who warned me, saying: ‘God loveth a cheerful giver.’ I laid my mouth in the dust, and said, let thy will be mine;

and as I rose, though the tear lay on my cheek there was a smile also.' ”

Who would not wish to wear the crown—the triple crown which giveth all things? All may wear it; the rich, the poor, the bond, the free, the learned, the ignorant. It is offered to all who are willing to purchase it by a life of holy meekness, and confiding trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is given to the weary old man, and to the sweet, innocent child, who lives only long enough to feel life's sorrows, and to know from what it has been redeemed.

How applicable to this subject are the touching lines below, which were written upon the death of a little girl, who came into life, and soon closed her eyes, and laid her weary limbs in the grave :

“ ‘Oh! I am weary, mother!’ said a faint and dying child,

As she turned to those who loved her, with a look all sweet and mild :

I slept through all the night, mother; and see! ’tis morning now,

But a band of pain and weariness is clasped upon my brow.

So weary! would that I could tread again my chamber floor,

And gaze without the window of my pleasant home once more!

Could I but drink the early dew, and scent the opening flowers,
And catch the matin songs of birds that nestle in my bowers !
Might I but on our peach trees look, and on the vines again,
And hear along our lowly roof the pattering of the rain !
But oh ! I am so weary, mother ! Canst thou not give me rest ?
Come near ! and let me lay my head upon thy gentle breast.'

"Thus spake the dying one. Her loving heart
Was struggling in the icy tide of death,
And yet she knew it not ! Her weariness
Was strange to her. Oft in her mother's arms
She had laid down and slept. Then why not now ?
Why now no sleep with a mother's love ?
She was a goodly child. Her every look
Was meekness ; and her voice was soft and low
As evening zephyrs are ; her graceful step
So lightly pressed the earth, she seemed to walk
As angels do—a messenger from Heaven !
She was a tender lily, floating on
The tide of time—scarce lifting up her head,
To bask it in the sunshine, or to bathe
In falling dews. All silent and all meek
She bore the eastward storms that on her fell ;
Rejoicing when 'twas light ; smiled when 'twas dark ;

Well knowing who gives lights and shades to earth.
Oh! 'tis no wonder that angelic hosts
Hovered around that loved one's dying bed;
And sweetly poured within her listening ear
A welcome song that none might hear but her:

“Come with us, little sister! Thy weary way is done
We have a home in Heaven for thee, thou weak and
dying one!

Thy band of pain is falling off, and we for thee have set,
Among the peerless thrones on high, a peerless coronet;
The dew, the birds, the light, the flowers, must fade
around thee here,

But we have deathless joys for thee in yonder starry
sphere:

It is all pure and holy—all glorious and fair—
And angel-children hover nigh to bid thee welcome
there.

Come, dying little sister! come to the SAVIOUR'S breast,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary
are at rest.'

“'Twas silence. In the room no breath was heard;
But a soft smile played round the dead child's face,
That spoke more eloquent than human words:

'Mourn not for me! I am not weary now!'”

CHAPTER X.

THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST.

I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. *David.*

WHenever you find a man contented with his lot, satisfied with his condition, you find one who approaches very near the summit of earthly bliss.

“A contented mind is a continual feast,” is not only the sentiment of Scripture but the natural dictate of human reason. Contentment will make the bleak mountains of the North look lovely in their frozen grandeur. It will modify and mitigate the parching heat of the South, and transform the burning, sandy desert into a blooming garden. It will trace lines of gladness on the rude mud-built walls of the cottage home, and enable the laborer to feel rich, when he is miserably poor. It will warm without fire; satisfy without food; clothe without raiment. Contentment is one of the highest of the Christian excellences, and by whom it is secured, a precious prize is won. To woman, it is more beautiful than robes of silk, and vestures of satin: to man, it imparts more glory than the habiliments of royalty. To youth, it imparts more honors than a

crown of gold : on age, it confers more respect and veneration than does the hoary head. It makes sickness sweet, and arrays blushing health in the adornments of a meek and quiet spirit. But while contentment in all matters of earthly moment is inculcated, no man is forbidden to improve his condition, or to seek for purer and more excellent attainments. The wise man may strive to be more wise ; the pure man may seek for greater purity ; the holy man may aspire to a greater degree of holiness. The wants of the body may be all supplied in this life, hence, it may be completely satisfied with the things of this life. The soul has infinite wants ; they can be supplied only in the future ; hence, the soul can be satisfied only with the future, and with things which are infinite and eternal.

And this leads me to remark,

1. The Christian can never be satisfied with the largest *earthly fortune*. Money is not the soul's highest good. In its place it is valuable. It can purchase a hundred objects to gratify our curiosity and satisfy our wants. It can build railroads and steamships ; lay the foundations and upbuild cities and empires ; erect costly residences, and endow schools and colleges. The man is wise who secures, by prudence and industry, his share of it, and uses it to the best advantage. God has never

made poverty a qualification for heaven, or declared that a rich man should not enter the world above. He has indeed shown that an idolatry of money, like an idolatry of dead images, will ruin the soul. He has exposed the tendency of money to corrupt the heart, and lead the soul down from its high position, and chain it to the dust, but He has never made money an insurmountable obstacle to eternal life. Many of the most pious men of past times, and of our age also, are men who have been favored by God with property, and these men will shine as bright, and no brighter, in the future life than poor men who have had an equal degree of personal piety.

Thus while I would not dissuade men from the pursuit of wealth under proper circumstances, and to be used for proper objects, I would caution every man who is making money, or who is now in the possession of riches, to beware lest it corrupt his heart, poison his spirit, consume his piety, and corrode his hope of heaven. While I would not urge men to be less diligent in business, I would assure them that the Christian must not, and cannot be satisfied with the largest fortune ever piled together upon the shores of time. Money has less power to confer pleasure upon the real child of God, than it has to give content to the careless sinner. The good man will ever be comparing his riches with

the pearl of great price, the fine residence in which he lives, with the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And as he looks at one, the value of the other will diminish, and in proportion as his title to the heavenly world is sure, will his grasp upon wealth lessen. He will feel that this world can yield no permanent pleasure, and give no deed of security to his gold and silver. He will ever be preaching upward—aspiring to heaven, and if his property is taken away, he will turn with true devotion to a fortune laid up on high, which can never be destroyed.

2. The Christian never can be satisfied with *the honors* of this life. It is pleasant for a man to have these. To be loved, admired, and praised, is not usually considered a calamity. And I would urge every young man to secure as much popularity, as much of the respect and good will of his fellow-men as he can, by a correct, consistent, and manly course. I envy not the feelings of the man who thinks himself rich enough to afford the loss of the respect of community, and the good opinion of society, and though I would not have the standard of religion or morality lowered in the least to secure the honor of men, yet I see no harm in laboring, by an honest life, to obtain the affectionate regard of the wise and good. But when a Christian secures this he is not satisfied. A worldly.

ambitious man may be, to some extent, for his highest aim is to secure the honors which a capricious world bestows on its favorites. While the true Christian would wish to be loved and respected for the influence which that love and respect would give him, he feels in his own heart the emptiness of all the applause which is bestowed upon him. He knows that the greenest and freshest laurel which is ever placed upon any human brow, will wither and fade. He is sure that the very voices which are, to-day, loudest in his praise, will be hushed in death to-morrow, and new voices will be shouting the honors of a new favorite. If his heart is active with the holy pulsations of divine life, he will value more one word of approbation from God, one smile from Christ, one expression of interest from angels, than all the thunders of applause which ever rises from the excited and intoxicated crowds of earth. "Well done, good and faithful servant," will be sweeter music to his ear than all the shouts of approbation which can peal out from the lips of men. Hence, he will not be satisfied—he will not be proud, though all men love him, and all men praise him. The vanity of human glory will stand in his mind beside the approbation of God, and he will weigh them in the balances of an enlightened and sanctified reason. Like the wisest and most honored man of ancient times, he

will look upon earth, and hear its shouts only to declare its vanity and worthlessness.

3. The Christian will not be satisfied with *friends*. Nothing on earth, of an earthly character, is sweeter than friendship. It is better than gold, and more to be desired than honor. I know of no picture which more nearly resembles heaven, than a happy family, united in love and faith, and living for the same great purpose. He who undervalues the family relation, disregards one of the chief blessings which God has given, and closes his eyes to the beauty of a scene which angels admire. But a multitude of friends will not fill the Christian's soul, or make him satisfied with earth. There is a place in his heart which domestic bliss does not occupy; there is a want of his soul which the family relation, and the joys of friendship cannot meet; and he feels that he never shall be supremely blest until he and his friends have been redeemed from earth, and are permitted to sit down at the feet of the universal Father, and bask in the sunlight of His countenance. However much domestic bliss a child of God may have, and however dear his relations may be to those around him, he feels that he is away from home, a stranger in a strange land, and as the weary traveler turns his eyes to the land of his fathers, and the home which contains the dearest objects of his

love, so the Christian pilgrim will look upward to his eternal home, and feel satisfied only when that bright world is reached. Especially will this feeling be strong, if, one by one, his relatives have gone before him, and stand waiting for him at the gates of bliss.

“Lo! round the throne, at God’s right hand,
The saints, in countless myriads, stand,
Of every tongue, redeemed by God,
Arrayed in garments washed in blood.

“Through tribulations great they came;
They bore the Cross, despised the shame;
From all their labors now they rest,
In God’s eternal glory blest.”

4. The Christian will not be satisfied with the greatest attainments in *knowledge*. The pursuit of knowledge confers pleasure. Every investigation which a man makes, every new truth which he receives, every new height to which he attains, brings enjoyment. The school-boy will feel his heart beat with pleasure, his eye will gleam with delight, when he has mastered a new rule in algebra, or worked out a difficult problem in geometry. Every new idea which he receives seems to elevate him in the scale of being, and brings him nearer to the measure of manhood. So to the man, there is

a sweet, mysterious pleasure flowing from discovery, and when a new point is attained, and the scholar can look off to some more distant objects, his soul finds great delight. But no attainments in knowledge can make a man satisfied with this earthly state. The more his soul is enlarged, the more he desires an infinite field to explore, and the less content is he with the limits which are set to his mental vision. He desires to go out of himself and fathom the deep, mysterious things of God, and, with the text-book of angels in his hand, fly away to worlds unknown, and become acquainted with them, as he is with this. An unconverted, irreligious man is restless and uneasy in this life, just to the extent of his knowledge. The more he knows, the more he sees of the worthlessness of earth, and the more desperate does the struggle of his mind become to break away from its confinement, and soar upward. The Christian will have this feeling to a much greater extent; and though he may know all that books, and research, and investigation, and deduction, can teach him, he wants something else, and his soul goes forth ever for some new thing.

5. The Christian will not be satisfied with the highest attainments in *piety*, in this life. This arises from the simple fact that the highest state is not attained on earth. The purest men of earth

have seen above them another eminence, and that they have desired to reach. David, in his old age, conquered the sins of his youth, and became an eminent Christian. His psalms are full of the most tender and delightful exhibitions of a Christian spirit and temper; but he was not satisfied with earth; he aspired to heaven. Paul was an eminent Christian; his piety was of the strongest and surest cast; his life was a living exhibition of the influence of grace, but he was not satisfied; his soul went out after other and better things, and heaven alone could fill him with glory. Harlan Page was an eminent Christian; his life gave delightful evidence of faith in Christ, and extensive intercourse and communion with God. As a layman, he accomplished more than most men of his generation. But he saw no time when he was satisfied—no time when he ceased to bewail the sins of his life, and call for more grace and faith. Dr. Payson was a Christian; none doubt it. His name has gone all over the world as eminently and consistently devoted to Christ. He stood where few men ever have stood. He had a view of life and death, time and eternity, which few men ever have had. His intercourse with God was intimate and confiding. He lived at the foot of the Cross, and looked up daily to see his Father's face shining out of the death of Jesus. But he was not

satisfied. Daily he mourned his want of love, and many a tear did he shed over the sins of his life. With all his tender piety, which we so much admire, he had not attained unto the measure of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, and he was not content.

Nor will any true Christian be. The nearer he gets to God, the nearer he will wish to go. The more like his Master he is, the more will he wish to imitate His example, and follow in His steps. The more of heaven he sees, the more will he love its blest abodes. The question then arises, when will the Christian be satisfied? The text answers it, and the firm, explicit declaration of David, is the declaration, as strongly expressed, and as fully realized, of every child of God. The Christian cannot be satisfied with wealth, though it may pour in upon him like a flood; nor with honor, though it may come in offices and praises continually; nor in friends, though sons may stand around his hearthstone like fir trees, and daughters may fill his house like precious stones; nor with wisdom, though it may enable him to count the stars, measure the earth, and gauge the depth of ocean; nor with piety, though it may be like that of David, or Paul, or Page, or Payson. He must be, he can be satisfied with nothing short of a full, complete, and perfect likeness to Christ. The assurance

that he should be like Christ, made the Psalmist desire to depart and be with him. It tended to purify his soul from flesh and sin, and refine his nature from the dross of earth. The doctrine will have the same effect upon the Christian in all the various stages of his Christian experience. It will render him uneasy in this life, and make him thirst for another life, where the fountains ever play, and the lights ever shine, and the songs ever sound. Then will the Christian be satisfied, when he reaches heaven. Awaking in the likeness of Christ, and having the same physical, mental, and moral image, he will find that all wealth, all honor, all friends, all wisdom, all piety are his. There is no height beyond to which he can climb, and though his course may be progressive, it will be rather a progression of heaven itself, along with which he will be borne from infinity to infinity, from eternity to eternity, always as happy, always as wise, always as holy as his nature can be. This is the portion of God's people; for this they wait; to this they aspire; and this they will surely reach.

My brethren, if we should be satisfied only with the likeness of Christ, how humiliating it is that so many are striving to content themselves with barely as much goodness as can keep them from making total shipwreck of salvation. The nature of religion is to reach forward; the spirit of Christ is

progressive ; and yet some disciples of Jesus seem to desire only as much piety as will give them a right to stay in the church, and number themselves with the people of God. The great aim of the Christian life is a likeness to Christ, and yet but few are seeking it here. The general opinion seems to be that some mysterious power in death will transform a cold, dead, lifeless branch of the church, into a living member of Christ. Men regard it as a sacred alchemy, which changes the worthless stone into gold, and makes that which was of no value, of great price. But I understand no such thing ; death has no such power. It may change, renew, transform, but it will not make a living Christian out of a dead professor ; it will not change a piece of worthless plaster into a diamond. The thousands who bear no resemblance to Christ here, and who are hiding in the church, may well fear that they will have no likeness to Christ hereafter. The pledge of future bliss is present holiness ; the assurance that we shall awake in the likeness of Christ, is a desire to imitate and be like Him now.

I am aware that we cannot be like Christ in all respects in this life, but morally we can be far more like Him than we are. I fail to find in us who profess the name of Christ that resemblance to Him which religion demands. His simplicity, meekness

prayerfulness, faith, love to man and God, are wanting in the characters of too many Christians. He was lovely, they are unlovely; He was holy, they are unholy; He was meek, they are proud; He was forgiving, they are revengeful; He was harmless, they are malicious. Scarcely any point of resemblance can be seen between them. And we naturally ask, if such who are so little like Christ now, will be entirely like him in the world to come? if they who possess so little of His spirit here, will be animated by His spirit hereafter? Reason and Scripture alike declare the thing an absurdity, and assure us that if the image of Christ is worn in heaven above, it must be stamped upon the life below.

“Mistaken souls that dream of heaven,
And make their empty boast,
Of inward joys, and sins forgiven,
While they are slaves to lust.”

And what a beautiful life our's would be, if the image of Jesus was impressed upon it. It might have tears, and groans, and sighs, and anguish, but angels and holy men would contemplate it with pleasure and delight. And shall this life be ours? shall the image of Jesus be on our conduct? shall the spirit of Jesus pervade our speech, and strengthen us for duty? Then heaven will begin on earth:

the Church will become a Paradise ! angels will sing around and hover over us : glad notes shall we raise to God and the Lamb forever

“O, may the heavenly vision fire
Our hearts with ardent love,
Till wings of faith, and strong desire,
Bear every thought above.’

CHAPTER XI.

THE REDEMPTION OF TIME.

Redeeming the time because the days are evil. *Paul.*

HUMAN life is represented in the Scriptures under various beautiful figures, expressing at once its shortness and importance. At one time it is compared to a leaf which springs from the expanding twig, changing its hue from summer beauty to autumnal shade, and falling to the ground, lies in its withered worthlessness, to teach man who treads upon it the lesson of his own destiny. At another time it is compared to a cloud which appears in the morning, attracts the gaze of the traveler awhile, and vanishes away in a moment as the sun rises above the hill tops of the east. Again, the flying shuttle, the shooting star, the ray of light, become figures to express the brief and uncertain character of our earthly existence. Mortals are urged to seize time as it flies, to use it while it continues, to improve it while it lasts. A lost fortune, a lost character, a lost friend, may be regained, but an inch of time once lost never can be recovered. On every moment of time is written "eternity," and as it rushes on to merge itself into the ocean of the past, no royal

edict can bring it back, no mighty hand roll it up again upon the shores of the present.

A few motives for the redemption of time will constitute our present article. And,

1. *Time is short.* The whole measure of earthly history will be short, from the creation to the destruction. Generation after generation is passing away like the morning shadows. The word of God, compared with the history of passing events, fully indicates that Earth's great drama is hastening to a crisis. Time has grown old; six thousand years encircle its weary brow, and with inconceivable velocity it is rushing on to its eternal sepulcher. And soon the end will come, the purposes for which time was given be accomplished, and its ages, years, and hours all be narrowed down to the moment of its close. The great events connected with the winding up of all earthly affairs, the rendering of the last account, cannot be far distant. The earth wrapped in flame, the heavens bleached and pale with terror fleeing away, the opening of the Book of Remembrance, in which all our good and evil deeds are recorded, are but a step before us.

And if time is so short when all its ages are combined, when so many generations unite in swelling its history, when it can boast of the misspent past, the neglected present, and the unknown future, what fearful brevity pertains to that little portion

of it allotted to us as individuals! If time from the beginning to the close, from Alpha to Omega is *short*, what word in the wide range of language can we use to express the transitory nature of our mortal career. No word or figure can express what we mean by the brevity of life. The weaver's shuttle, the flying cloud, the rushing torrent, the tramping horse, the lightning flash, the thought of man, are all too tardy in their movements to mark the flight of time. The fading cloud, the falling leaf, the disappearing comet, transitory as they are, are far too enduring to illustrate the time we are to live.

“Time is winging us away
To our eternal home;
Life is but a winter's day,
A journey to the tomb.
Youth and beauty soon will flee,
Blooming beauty lose its charms;
All that's mortal soon shall be
Inclosed in death's cold arms.”

What a motive this to snatch from the hand of waste the little portion of our lives that remains! What an argument this to improve the few remaining months of life to the best advantage! to give to God and a beseeching world the existence which is so soon to end in death! On every side we are surrounded with teachers and monitors. The count-

less living and the innumerable dead warn us. The animate and the inanimate admonish us. Each has a thunder's tongue and a trumpet voice. They all say "Time is short." It now becomes no matter of surprise that Paul should so earnestly exhort his fellow sinners to redeem whatever might remain of a wasted, misspent life, and give it to a holy work; rescue it from complete loss, and apply it to the purpose for which it was intended.

2. *Time is valuable.* The smallest objects and the briefest space are not always destitute of value. On the contrary, the value of many things consists in their rareness, and the brevity of their duration. Time, though short and fleeting, has an inestimable value. In it, the highest and noblest objects may be accomplished, and many grand and lofty purposes executed. The page of history reveals to us how many heroic acts, how many virtuous deeds, how many lofty purposes, have been crowded into its narrow bounds. With its truthful voice it tells us how much of good, men have done; how many streams of woe they have dried up; how many fires of sin they have quenched. We also learn how much evil, men have done; how they have made earth one vast Golgotha, plowed deep channels for the tears of mourners, quenched the light of mind and intellect, and on the tide of time scattered all along the wrecks of ruined characters.

Though time is very short, and is hurrying rapidly away, it is pregnant with great events. Well improved, a man may astonish even himself in the good deeds which he may perform, and, departing from earth, leave an influence which shall be felt for years and ages. The only reason why time appears of so little consequence, is because we abuse and squander so much of it—waste so many of its precious hours and days in indolent inactivity. We measure a man's life by what he does in it; by what he can accomplish in the few fleeting years of his brief existence. The lives of too many men are like an empty cylinder, filled up with cobwebs and dust, humming and turning, but emitting no harmony. Judge time by those lives, and it is worthless; they have not improved it to any good advantage; it is wasted in pursuits and trifles light as air. The life of other men is like a nest of vipers; look into them, and they are snarled and tangled; confusion and blackness reigns, reason is fighting with lust, conscience and conduct are at variance, crime prevails and reaches out its sneaking head from every day and hour, and hideous forms flit around it, all marking that life as not only worthless, but terribly destructive. Better not be born under such circumstances; life has no worth, and time no value, thus to be abused. It is not empty, but full of dark and dreadful deeds:

it gives no ringing sound, but a hiss of malice and a groan of despair.

The life of other men is different, and shows fully the value of time. Each day is some delicate instrument achieving some sublime purpose. No moments are like airy spirits, unseen and formless, flitting away to tell how little they were cared for, but angels laden with good, to carry the cup of healing to the broken form of disease and want.

To show the value of time, we must go to some of earth's good men, who have used it for a wise and rational purpose, and who have filled it up with deeds which will shine hereafter in their crowns of glory. We may find them in every profession, in every walk in life, in every condition in society, in every age and clime where God is known and where His laws form the basis of society. Who can estimate the value of the life of Luther? Who can tell the influence exerted by Calvin in the little time allotted to him? Who can measure the years of Edwards, and Griffin, and their associates in labor? Who can tell the worth of time to Judson, and through him, to a perishing world? Deeper than plummet ever sounded is the current of their deeds, and higher than thought ever reached is their praise. They made life a scene of usefulness and toil, and demonstrated its inestimable worth and importance.

3. *Time has already been misspent.* This is true of a large majority of the members of the human family. In early life much time is wasted before definite ideas and plans of usefulness are formed, and the mind arrives at fixed and settled principles of action. The first twenty or thirty years are employed in preparing to do something afterward. The young man does not dream that he can begin active life the moment he emerges from boyhood, but his eye is fixed upon a period far distant, which he will reach after years of study and preparation. The feeling of responsibility does not commence and exert its influence until after years have rolled away, and been numbered with the lost years. Their time is lost in discussing plans of usefulness. This object and that, comes up, evils increase, errors grow strong. while we are arranging our mode of attack and turning over in our minds the best way of defeating them. And when the great plan of life is formed, irresolution and inactivity often defeat its purpose. The advocate of truth turns aside to amuse himself with pictures, and flowers, and sweet sounds. Let any man sit down and ask himself what he has done in the world, and he will be amazed that he has accomplished so little, while working so hard. He has supported his family, read a few books, enjoyed a few pleasures, accom-

plished a little good most of it doubtful, and now stands near the borders of the grave. Let him compare his life with some one who has devoted himself to the good of the human family, and he will find that there is a vast difference between his own life and that of another man who had no more means of usefulness, no more ability to do good, no more advantages in life, than he had himself, when they commenced together the course which they have run, but with very different success.

The idea that so much time has already been misused, should lead every man to improve the portion that remains to him. Many will find that almost the whole of life has been spent in an abuse of God's kindness, and in a sinful rejection of His dear Son; not merely in a state of passive indifference, but in open aggressive warfare upon the government of the universe. They will find that they have been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and while enjoying the benevolence of God, have been lifting up their hands against Him, and slighting the love of the Saviour who died in their stead. The motive derived from misspent time for future activity, is strong and convincing. The army which has slept too long and been betrayed, feels it: the laborer who has rested in the heat of the day, and sees the sun going down, acts upon it: the man in a dangerous stream, who has

been too long pleasing himself with the flowers upon the bank, and rouses to find himself in the rapids, owns its force ; and he who on the tide of time has been floating down to the gulfs of woe, lured, charmed, and cheated by Satan, but awakes at length to see where he is, and feel his danger, promptly begins to redeem the time, and seize the passing moment to do the work, which thus far, though most important, has been most neglected.

4. *The present days are evil.*—This is a reason urged by the apostle why time should be redeemed ; and though eighteen hundred years have rolled away since he lived, the fact is as clear now as then. It is predicted that as the world approaches its consummation, evil will increase, and sin grow bolder and more insulting. This prediction painfully corresponds with observation and experience. The greater increase of light, the more desperate becomes the powers of darkness. Intrenched as Satan is in the strongholds of society, exerting such an influence as he does over the human heart, it is not to be supposed that he would lay down his scepter without a fearful struggle. Hence, in his contest with Christ, which is now going on more fearfully than at any former time, he has summoned the powers of hell, the depravity of earth, his own almost resistless energies, his infernal malignity, and these are all abroad among men, endeavoring

to overturn the kingdom and power of Christ. God against Satan, and Satan against God, is the order of battle. While on one hand light never shone with such brilliancy, and truth never gained such conquests before; on the other hand, vice and error never appeared in such seductive attitudes, and secured such dominion over the hearts of men as now. The contest between truth and error, freedom and slavery, light and darkness, rages every year with increasing violence, and every power of man, and every moment of expiring time is needed on the side of God. As one little community may be divided on some narrow, trivial, and comparatively unimportant question in political economy, so the great world is engaged and divided. Emperors never stood in their palaces and looked down with more interest upon fields where armies were rushing together, deciding the fate of vast empires, than do the inhabitants of heaven upon the struggle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. It was this great contest which Paul saw going on in the world, which induced him to raise the rallying cry, and call upon the friends and followers of Jesus to redeem the time which had already run to waste, and improve the rest for God and His holy cause.

5. Time should be redeemed, because *a great work is to be done in it*. This work is two-fold .

in man, and in society. The work in man consists in his personal salvation. For this he lives, and for this God keeps him in being. The first and greatest duty of this life is to prepare for one which succeeds it, and until this is done, every other effort is out of place. The man who begins to reform society before his own heart is reformed from the corruptions of sin, and his title to heaven made sure, is guilty of an unpardonable inconsistency. Holy men, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, urge us all to seek *first*, and in preference to all things, the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The whole of life is not too long for such an enterprise, and the Bible constantly demands that every one should make his own peace with God. Between the Creator and the creature there is enmity and opposition. The carnal mind is at enmity against God on one side, and God is angry with the wicked every day, on the other side. The great work of this life is to effect a reconciliation. Unless this is secured the soul of man is lost, and life thrown away. Now some have lived a quarter of a century, and some a half a century, and have not made the first attempt to reconcile themselves with God, or insure their own salvation. They have secured fortunes, and honors, and friends, but they have not obtained the pearl of great price. They are but a step from death.

and yet all the work remains to be done. After death no change can be effected. A man's character will not be open to change when once the spirit has removed from time and entered upon its returnless voyage. Here, and here alone, can salvation be secured, and yet the hours pass, the days fly away, the months and years roll on, and man's great work unfinished, aye, never commenced, remains the sport of the depraved heart.

If a work upon which a man's life depended should be given him to do, and the time should be limited to one month, he would be insane should he leave it to be performed on the thirtieth day. But here stands man before God, with the salvation of his soul to be secured, his everlasting happiness or misery suspended on it, the time limited to life, and that life may be one year or fifty, and yet the first step in the great work has not been taken. There can be no case supposed, no illustration framed, which can exhibit the folly of the man who thus neglects his salvation. Human language is too weak to describe the madness of a man with a soul to save, heaven to gain, God to be reconciled, who leaves it until the last day or year he has to live.

The work which man has to do, out of himself, in society, I have already alluded to. He owes something to his fellow-men. There exists be-

tween him and man universal, a bond of brotherhood. He is under obligation to the rich and poor of his own city, to the afflicted and criminal immediately around him, to all in distress and woe to the distant pagans and the benighted barbarians. Like Paul, he is a debtor to Jew and Greek. Time, this little, narrow isthmus on which he stands, and which, like the finger of time, reaches out into the eternal ocean, is all that remains, and confined to it, must be all his efforts to do good to a lost and guilty race.

We are admonished every day of the brevity of life, and the importance of having our work well done. We can pause, and remember the names of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wives and husbands, who were with us yesterday, but who to-day are covered up in the cold ground. Removed from life, love, and labor here, they await the trumpet of the archangel, which will soon call upon them to give an account of their time, and answer for all their deeds. In a few days—and O how swiftly will they fly—shall we be cut down, our bodies die, and our frames be laid away out of the sight of those who love us, and all the joys of earth, to slumber with our departed kindred. Our time is short, and to very many of us, the day is not far distant when we shall receive the summons.

Let us ask ourselves if the work of life is done. Have we all secured our own personal salvation? and are we ready, at any moment, to meet God? Let us remember that, swifter than a weaver's shuttle, we are passing away, and TO-DAY may be the last opportunity we shall have to make our peace with God, or benefit our fellow-men. It is not a small thing to squander on unworthy pursuits the precious time which God has given for a noble purpose, and well for us if when time is ended, we find that it has been used profitably. This idea I would impress upon the aged hearer. Time is short; your wasted sands are almost run; the glass runs low; the sun is almost down. The middle-aged may understand it, for their time is short; to-morrow, perhaps to-night, the lamp now burning so brightly, may be extinguished, aye, extinguished ere life's great duty is done, or life's great purpose achieved. The time of the young is short; many a flower fades ere it is fully blown; many a sun is obscured by clouds ere it has reached the meridian; many a cloud is dissolved ere it has rolled across the sky; many a life is ended ere manhood is attained. Yes, the time is short for hoary age, or middle life, or youth. Each minute makes it less, and every hour brings the pilgrim nearer to his eternal home.

“There is no measure but of change ;
No present hour is found ;
The past, the future, fill the range
Of time’s unceasing round.”

Like a solitary soul, I seem perched on a little point of time. All behind me is past, gone, irreclaimable, lost : all before me is blank—not mine—unfilled and uncertain. When shall I stumble ? when shall I fall ? and over me sweep a wailing sound, “ Time is short ? ”

The young disciple whose death has given rise to these reflections, was born in Boston, August 9th, 1829, and died on the morning of November 17th, 1846. Having improved her death as a suitable occasion to draw lessons from the brevity and value of time, it becomes me to speak of her whose early death has furnished the opportunity, and given the open ear, and the applying conscience. And I do it with more readiness and pleasure because I know that she whom we mourn, presented an example worthy of our imitation. I know that she redeemed the time, and was prepared to make a joyful entrance into the future state. She had secured the good part which never will be taken from her ; she understood life’s great object, and remembered life’s great end ; and while her companions might have ridiculed—while those older in life might have despised her youth, she gave a les-

son of Christian virtue which angels admired, and men should have learned with joy. I know not that the early years of our young friend were characterized by any thing more than by an unusual thoughtfulness. I am told by those who knew her best, and valued her most, that when in her extreme youth, she exhibited much of that prudent forethought that seldom belongs to childhood, and the testimony of her parents is, that in all things she maintained the strictest conformity to their wishes. To the mother, she united the relation of companion and counselor with that of the child; and in her care of the younger members of the family she seemed to blend the fondness of a sister with the judgment of a parent. At home, in the crowded city, and away at school, this thoughtfulness manifested itself in her choice of associates. She was ever careful to select from the virtuous and the good, not recognizing the unjust distinction which wealth and dress are sometimes disposed to make. She seemed to appreciate virtue, among the rich or the poor, and chose for her companions those whose moral characters most resembled her own. In the revival of 1842, she became a subject of renewing grace—began earnestly to redeem the time, and prepare for that world to which she soon removed. On the first of May, she followed the example of her Saviour—was buried

with Him by baptism, and the same day received the public token of Christian fellowship. The sight was one which angels must have reviewed with pleasure. The young disciple, with several more of nearly her own age, thus early in life signifying her faith in a risen Saviour, must have sent a thrill of joy through all the courts of heaven.

Her after life corresponded with a profession thus early and publicly made, and as far as was in her power, she adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour by a well-ordered life and a godly conversation. Her mental powers were of a superior character. Almost invariably, as I am told, she stood at the head of her class in school, and earned the reputation of a diligent scholar and a kind classmate. Some time previous to her death she had been connected as a pupil with the female seminary at Bradford, and was cherishing the hope that she might pass through the prescribed course of study, and graduate at the usual time. With this prospect before her mind, she left her friends early in the spring of the present year, and had scarcely arrived at Bradford ere the disease which terminated her life made its appearance. She returned home. Then followed seasons of hope and despondency. Physicians tried their skill. All that a father's kindness and a mother's love could do was done. Council after council was held, and when the decision came,

its announcement blasted the last lingering hope. They told her she must die, and looked to see her cheek fade and her lip tremble. But she was prepared; and though she had cherished hopes of life, the idea of death did not intimidate her. I visited her in her sickness, and found her calm and resigned. She wished to live for the sake of her friends, for her own she wished to die. I have seen Christians die in greater joy and ecstasy, but I never saw one in which the true spirit of calm and holy resignation was more remarkably developed. That holy sentence, "Thy will be done," seemed to be the voice of her dying hour. On the night before her death, as I sat by her bedside, she said to me, "How sweet heaven appears: those I love are there: I long to go, when Jesus shall bid me come, and I pray that He may call me home to-night." That night she died. Afflicted parents, your loss is great. You will find a vacancy at home which God alone can fill. You have fondly wished to educate your child for usefulness, but God, for some wise and benevolent purpose, has taken her away. She is happy now, Jesus is her teacher, and she stands, with the angel throng before his throne. From her bright abode she is looking down on you; she still remembers you with fondness; "She loved you on earth, she will love you in heaven." Afflicted brothers of the deceased, your loss is also great. To you her last kind word has

been spoken, the last token of a sister's affection has been given you, the last prayer she has offered in your behalf, and now she pleads your cause before the throne of God. She utters your name, and blends it with the name of Jesus, and then, like an angel of mercy, she speeds her way down from the skies to shield you from Earth's temptations. Will you let your sainted sister plead for you in vain? Her home is heaven, shall it not be your home? She has redeemed her time, shall not yours also be improved? Associates of the deceased, you are warned. Our departed sister, when she found her life ebbing away, thought of your condition, and desired your salvation. Some of you she warned, and for others she left her dying blessing. You that saw her, know how well prepared she was to go; you know how little she cared for earth; you know how she loved and thought of heaven. Like her, you soon will fade away. Your present health is no evidence of a long-continued life, and I ask, as from her grave, are you as well prepared to go?

To this whole congregation another call is given. The angel of destruction is sweeping through our already broken ranks; almost every Sabbath death leaves some seat in the sanctuary of God vacant, and youth and age alike are falling. The green grass over the grave murmurs, "the time is short." The hearse moving along in its solitary majesty

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whispers, "the time is short." The bell sounding out its mournful tone declares that "time is short." God, in His word, by His providences, and by His minister, proclaims that "time is short," and soon from the death-pillow of each of us will be heard the silent voice of the departing spirit. "Time is short."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SIX DEATH-BEDS.

All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.
Solomon.

MEN live in different styles, and are honored according to different standards. One bows his head in poverty; the earth, wide as it is, affords him no shelter; the song of praise is never sung for him, and he lives unhonored and dies unwept. Another rides in a carriage, lives in a palace, subsists on the choicest dainties, exists amid music, and dies amid lamentations. The first is buried by the hand of charity in a grave which no stone marks, and over which no pitying mourners stand; the second has a marble sarcophagus, a splendid tomb, where strangers stand to wonder at the fame of him who lies buried within. In life, these two men walked at the wide extremes of society; in death, they meet together, each occupying the same narrow space, each crumbling back to the same dust, and each, in a little while, like the other, unhonored and unloved.

The rich man and the poor man, the learned man and the ignorant man, alike turn to dust again ;

while posterity forget that they have ever lived on earth.

To illustrate this truth, let us turn in succession to several different death-bed scenes which, unlike in life, are changed into the same image by death.

1. *The rich man dies.* In a splendid room he lies, breathing out his life. All around are the signs of luxury and wealth. The couch on which he lies is of the softest down; the lamps which burn around him send out a grateful incense; the physician who watches at his side is a man profoundly learned, and wonderfully skilled in the healing art; the attendants are experienced, judicious, and careful; and not a single experiment is left untried to prolong the passing life, and give the dying man an hour more of time. But slowly and steadily death comes on. The dying man, whose slightest voice has always been obeyed with promptness, bids back his terrible visitor, and demands time to settle up his vast estate, and prepare for the long journey. He asks that he may live until the schemes which he has formed, and the plans which he has in progress, shall all be carried out. The present is the most inconvenient time for him to die, and he pleads that life may be prolonged a year, a month, a week, a day. But how vain the plea! Who ever knew Death to retire one single instant, or relax his grasp, when once he had de-

terminated on victory? And so the rich man dies—his schemes of gain and pleasure unfinished; his purposes of worldly ambition unaccomplished; his plans formed in health but half fulfilled—buildings in the process of erection—goods purchased, but not received—notes due, but not paid—and life's objects all unfinished.

He has a splendid funeral. A long train of carriages follow him to some beautiful cemetery, and he is laid down in a lot which his wealth purchased for himself and his kindred; and there he lies in that little narrow house, the food for worms, the heir of decay, until the morning of the resurrection. His wealth, his influence, his merits, his grand estate, his honors, and his offices, have all been ineffectual in staying the ravages of death, and he expired just as the poor man did, who died without his gate, and was borne away to some rude tomb, over which the flowers were ashamed to bloom and the birds to sing.

What a living lesson of wisdom must the old Abbey of Westminster, where sleep the honored nobility of the proudest nation on earth, be to all the rich and powerful who visit it. Those urns and slabs, tall monuments and effigies, dim inscriptions in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, tell how, like other men, kings went down from thrones and regal honors, to lay their heads as low as the most abject of

their subjects ; how queens, who reveled in stately balls, and presided at banquets, and drew the admiration of the people, have passed away, and now, like common dust, are crumbling back to their original elements ; how nobility doth like beggary perish ; and majesty doth fade and die like poverty.

2. *The learned man dies.* Science and learning have made great advancement. The mind of man has been wonderfully developed, and now exerts controlling influence over the empire of matter. The heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth, have been made subjects of investigation, until their relations, affinities, properties have been discovered, and to a great extent applied to some practical purpose. But the philosopher, the chemist, the man of science and erudition, has not yet discovered any way in which death may be avoided, or decay prevented. Ask the learned man, and he will tell you of the heavenly bodies, how they act upon each other, and what fixed and certain laws they obey. He will descend with you into the bowels of the earth, and explain the various developments of nature there, and enter without hesitation into the various buried stratas, and draw instruction from them all. But if you ask him what remedy he has found for death, he will shake his head and give no reply. He has no antidote for dissolution and decay, and when they

come to the poor perishing frame of man, he looks on without any power to stay the work, or roll back the progress of destruction.

Go to the death-bed of the learned man, and you will find him surrounded with all the attendants of wisdom. The ponderous volume, the crucible, the philosophical apparatus, and the living philosophers; but from none of these can he derive any information which will enable him to live one single hour. The medical attendant can do no more for him, than he did yesterday for a poor ignorant slave who died in a rude hovel on the same street; and the wise man dies just as soon, just as sadly, just as irretrievably, as the poorest and most abject pauper.

They bear him to an honored grave, and schools and colleges bewail his loss; but he lies in a narrow coffin, and occupies less room on the earth than he did in his little dim, smoky study. Like the rich man that we saw buried, he has a little tenement, and needs no more. The wisest of his friends employ themselves in devising an inscription to decorate his tomb, and as they sweep their eyes around the pale corpses in the field, where rich and poor, learned and ignorant, lie together, they write: "All go into one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

3. *The proud man dies.* Pride develope itself

in this life in different ways, and all are more or less affected with it. The king on his throne; the statesman in the senate of nations; the minister in his pulpit, are all proud to a greater or less extent. In some men it shows itself in dress, and in some by a want of dress. Some yield to it at one point, and some at another. But what a contrast is furnished by the pride of life, and the humility of death! For a few poor years, the pampered body is made the object of attention, covered with jewels, and displayed to the best advantage. Drawing license from some honor or office which has been conferred upon him, the dying mortal lifts his head above his fellows, and

“Dress’d in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep.”

But like the humble man, the proud man is laid upon his dying pillow. He has been accustomed to consider himself better, and superior to those around him; but death deals with him as severely and as terribly as with the meanest of the sons of earth. It comes to him, interrupts his joys, and closes his vain lips, and leaves him a stiff, inanimate, useless corpse. And sometimes pride extends beyond the hour of death. The fashionable funerals, the pompous parade of the grave, the

show and confusion of funeral occasions, is often hollow, miserable mockery, and money is lavished to carry out a foolish pride, in which the dead can share no part. What, think we, do those who have descended to the dust care about the number of carriages, and the monument, and the amount of cost, and show, and glitter, which is made when one poor mortal goes out into the unknown. I read awhile since an account of a funeral which occurred in one of our large cities, by which the angels in heaven must have been shocked.

“The wife of a man of means, and the daughter of a wealthy citizen of this city—people too fond of show—recently died. She had been called beautiful before a family of children had gathered around her, and she had not renounced her claim to that title. She died, and a large concourse was invited to the funeral. The coffin was made of rosewood, inlaid with silver, lined with plaited satin. The whole top was removed, and the deceased lay in state in her narrow home. She was dressed in a white merino robe, made like a morning gown, faced with white satin profusely quilted and ornamented. The sleeves were open, similarly lined and wrought—a stomacher of the richest embroidery covered the breast, whence all life had forever fled. The head was covered by a cap of choice lace, and a wreath of fresh flowers arranged around. The hands

were crossed upon the breast, with the *fingers covered with expensive jewelry*, which seemed to sparkle, as if in glad pride that the eye was dim forever. Thus bedizened, poor food for worms, she went down into the grave, there to await her God !”

And, after all this pomp, this buried object of pride and fashion had no larger home, and no other fate, than the most degraded female who ever went from life. The worms know nothing about the condition of those who are given to their care, and they have dominion alike on all. An appropriate inscription to make upon the grave-stone of the proud is, “ They all go to one place ; dust they are, and unto dust do they return.” Like the poor, and abject, and forlorn, that wait the sound of the same trumpet, which will call the proud and the humble, alike, to one great trial.

4. *The self-righteous man dies.* Of all sorts and forms of pride, none is so loathsome and hateful as that which renders a man complacent in his supposed acts of goodness. Self-righteousness is a blemish in human character which, though common, cannot be viewed with too much abhorrence. That one should feel a decent self-respect, and be ready so to live as to receive the good opinion of others, none deny ; but assumed goodness, which covers a black and corrupted heart, an hypocrisy which makes long prayers and does alms only to be

seen of men, is never too much detested. We are all sinners ; if we are destitute of sin in one form, we are guilty of it in another ; and if we are all tried by a true and perfect standard, we shall be found wanting. Hence, to assume a goodness which we do not possess, to cover up a corrupt life with a fair profession, and to demand privileges on virtues not our own, is the veriest hypocrisy. But such men are found, who live, move, and have their being in self-conceit ; who exist in an atmosphere of deception which they have made ; who deem themselves better than others who live more correct lives, and have more constant communion with God. Much of this self-righteousness arises from a false estimate of ourselves, and from an abandonment of the great doctrine of justification by faith, and a reliance upon weak, inefficient human goodness. But the death-bed of a man brings all his professions and pretensions to the test, and tries them by an infallible rule. When he approaches the last hour, the hopes of the pharisee fade away, and his expectations are blown and lost. He has as many fears, as many torturing forebodings, as much distress over his past life, as if he had never deceived himself or deceived others. He is stripped of self, and his naked character stands out as the light of eternity shines upon it. He is dismantled of his broad phylactery and alms-giving,

and long, eloquent prayers, and finely finished figures, which now lie like an old, worthless, castaway garment, the scorn of angels, and the torment of himself. Those very objects which are good and worthy in themselves, and the performance of which so adorn the human character, are, in consequence of being trusted in, and boasted of, made sources of shame and condemnation, and the soul departs, feeling that all is lost.

The body goes with the rich man, and the learned man, and the proud man, and they decay together. A few feet of ground contains the form of him who deemed himself better than his fellows, and who carried his head high in consequence of his supposed virtues. His presumptuous boasts, his moving protestations, his loud and pious professions, his long and labored speeches, and, alas! his heartless prayers, are all with him in the tomb. There lies his perished goodness—flowers which emit no fragrance, and leaves which present no beauty. This is a picture of much of the righteousness of earth. It is the sure fate of all that embellishment of character which does not emanate from the pure morality of the great atonement. Like the flower which the frosts destroy, it is as soon forgotten and lost.

5. *The wicked man dies.* It seems as though this fact was forgotten by the mass of ungodly men

that make up society. By wicked men in this connection, I do not refer to those who are merely unconverted, but who are outwardly amiable, but to the openly wicked and abandoned. Such there are in great numbers. They are known by the awful blasphemy and the profane oath; by the open insult which is heaped upon the blessed Saviour; by the base denials of the existence of God, and all those open acts of wickedness which make men and angels tremble. The head of the robber and the murderer will lie in dust. Though they have braved God for years, and hardened themselves against Him, they will at last go down to people the world of shades, and their ashes will mingle with the great aggregate of dust. I say this is a forgotten fact, and men, when they rush to crime, think not of it. But the bravery and impiety of wicked men are no proofs against the attacks of crime, as the whole history of the past will show. Where is the body of Paine, the noted infidel, who died in the most aggravated torments? It has returned to dust! Where is the body of Alexander, whose course was stained with blood? It has returned to dust! Where is the body of Napoleon, whose name carried terror over a whole continent, and whose fall created a shout of thanksgiving? It has returned to dust! And the wicked men who now live, and who are darkening the earth with

their crimes, are all tending downward to the grave, and in a little while, naught will remain of them but dust and ashes. The universal sentence is, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

6. *The good man dies.* The highest state of virtue is no proof against death. The old patriarchs, who watched and talked with God, who lived in near, dear, and intimate communion with Him, passed away when they had filled up the measure of their earthly being. The apostles, leaving some noble testimony to the value of religion, and the power of Christ to save from hell, went down to the grave, and their dust is lost. The most holy men of our times, and the most laborious and successful, too, have died, in one faith, and ascended to one Lord. The Christian in vain wanders about among the alters of the church, in search of those who once ministered to the people of God. He will ask for Whitefield, the intrepid apostle, who labored awhile, led a multitude to Christ, but whose voice is now silent in the cold and dreary tomb. A few bones beneath the pulpit in which he once preached will be shown as a reply. He may ask for Wesley, the founder of a great community of saints, the eloquent expounder of the Scriptures, and the now honored name, which is engraven in the front rank of the hosts of God? An unassuming monument in the rear of the church in which

he once declared the Gospel of Christ, tells us where all that remains of Wesley is deposited.

We ask for Roger Williams, the great founder of another sect, the exponent of civil and religious liberty, the first to declare a sentiment of truth and liberty which runs through our declaration of independence, and our federal constitution? His grave is not known; his ashes are scattered; his dust has returned to dust.

If we inquire for men of modern times who have lived well, and labored well for God, we shall receive similar replies. Wisner and Worcester, Baldwin and Stillman, Griffin and Knowles, on this side of the water, and Irving and Chalmers, Carson and Pierce, on the other side of the ocean, are sleeping in the dust, while Judson and Mills, the great founders and originators of American missions, sleep beneath the wave. They have all gone to one place; dust they were, and unto dust they have returned.

And living good men are to die. The virtues of their lives, and the heroism of their deeds, will not keep them in life, beyond the appointed bounds! They are all tending to the tomb—all marching to their graves, soon to decompose, scatter, be lost, forgot, and perished.

How keenly do these reflections rush upon us when we stand in some rural cemetery, and see

the graves and monuments of good men and bad, rich men and poor, wise men and ignorant, all together, without distinction or classification. The rich ruler, and the poor subject; the philosopher, and the unlettered mechanic; the Christian and the warrior, all lying as if they were of kith and kin. This thought impressed itself upon my mind as, a few months ago, I stood in the retreats of Pere la Chaise, which overlooks the city of Paris, a burial ground of extraordinary interest, which is filled up with monuments and chapels, and where dead marshals and starved paupers—wealth and poverty—fashion and aristocracy—love and valor, have all found a place to repose. Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return, seemed to be in my mind continually, as I saw the tombs all covered over with wreaths and votive offerings; the chapels filled with images and crosses; the altars beaming with lighted candles which, like the vestal fires of ancient Rome, never go out. It was the end of life, and on the tomb-stones there, were a hundred inscriptions which uttered the same melancholy testimony, “Dust to dust, ashes to ashes.”

Is there a strong man here? Your strength will depart, your vigor will decrease, and you will die. Is there a wise man here? Your wisdom cannot find any way to obviate the pains of death, or any

path into the future but through the cold grave. Is there a rich man? Your wealth can purchase a downy bed, and exciting cordials, but not an inch of time, nor a moment of life? Is there a proud man? Your pride will become food for worms? Is there a wicked man? Death will end your blasphemy and sin, and introduce you to your doom. Is there a good man? You, too, must go, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Aye, all mankind, in one long procession, are going to the grave—the good, the bad, the rich, the wise—to lie in one cold and dismal home. The tribes of men are like the regiments of a vast army, numbers of which are continually falling in the march. But the grave holds nothing but the clay; the spirit enters heaven, and a precious memory is cherished of them in our hearts. As surely as all die and go to one place, as surely shall all rise and stand before God.

“Where do they dwell? Near grassy mounts, by daisies,
Lilies, and yellow-cups of fairest gold;
Near gray-grown walls, where in wild, tortuous mazes,
Old clustering ivy wreathes in many a fold.

Where, in red summer noons.

Fresh leaves are rustling;

Where, 'neath large autumn moons,

Young birds are nestling—

Do they dwell there?

“Where do they dwell? In sullen waters, lying
On beds of purple sea-flowers newly sprung;
Where the mad whirlpool’s wild and ceaseless sighing
Frets sloping banks, by dark green reeds o’erhung;
Where, by the torrent’s swell,
Crystal stones glitter,
While sounds the heavy bell
Over the river—
Do they dwell there?

“No: for in these they slumber to decay,
And their remembrance with their life departs:
They have a home—nor dark, nor far away—
Their proper home—within our faithful hearts:
These happy spirits wed,
Loving forever;
There dwell with us, the dead,
Parting—ah, never—
There do they dwell!”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DOOR OF HEAVEN.

And behold, a door was opened in heaven. *Revelation.*

JOHAN was a privileged man. It was his lot to gaze into the secrets of time, and reveal that which should come to pass. That John understood all he saw we have no reason to believe. To him it was a vision, and he probably did not know what meaning to attach to the sacred symbols. The various visions of the Apocalypse passed before him, and he saw them as visions only. He was the agent in the hands of God of communicating to us on whom the ends of the world have fallen the undeviating purposes of the court of heaven. But though concealed from him, he must have known that a sacred and glorious reality was hidden beneath these figures. To his prophetic mind there must have appeared a wonderful meaning in all he saw and in every sentence he heard. It was worth all the sorrows of a banishment to Patmos thus to hold communion with heaven, and be permitted thus to investigate things unutterable.

Shortly after John was banished to Patmos he

received from God a message for the seven symbolic churches of Asia Minor. Then followed the glorious visions, in the length and breadth of which he saw the whole religious, political, civil, and military history of the world, from his standpoint, to the end of time. I propose now to comment upon what may appropriately be denominated his first glimpses into heaven.

John probably, at the time he received the vision, may have been musing on the condition and history of the church of Christ. Banished from his friends and his labors among the people, shut out from the world, he had time for awful thoughts. While he mused and pondered on celestial things, with his eyes and heart turned heavenward, he saw the outlines of a door forming in the sky, each minute becoming more distinct and intelligible. Soon the door opened, — the vision does not say whether upon its own golden springs or turned by angelic hands, — and the exiled minister had a long and glorious view into the paradise of God. But still all was indistinct. The view was not clear, and the objects were all too distant. We may suppose he longed and panted for a nearer view of divine and heavenly objects. While thus he waited, a trumpeter came forth and invited him to take the view for which his soul had thirsted. “Come up hither.”

said the heavenly messenger, "and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." "And immediately," says John, "I was in the spirit." He means by this that he was baptized in the spirit, overwhelmed with the rapture of the vision, and inspired to tell the things which he saw.

He first saw a *throne*. God is a sovereign. Whenever and wherever men obtain a partial or complete view of him, he appears as the King of kings. If they see him in the great work of creation, it is clothed with all the insignia of royalty, speaking and it is done, commanding and it stands fast. If they see him dealing with a few rebellious tribes in the wilderness, it is always as a monarch. He never places himself on an equality with man, or lowers his dignity. He treats with men as with subjects, and never admits them to any other position except through Christ. His sovereignty shines out of every act, and whenever we see him he is on his throne.

John saw *God* on the throne. He does not attempt to describe him. If you open your Bibles and turn to this passage, you will see that the expression is a singular one: "Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on it." You will notice that the word "one" is in italics, signifying that there is nothing in the original text answering to this word, but is an addition by the

translators to make sense. As John left it, it would read, "A throne was set in heaven, and ——— sat on it." He did not dare to speak that awful name, JEHOVAH. He merely says "he was, to look upon, like a jasper and a sardine stone." The idea here conveyed is of great brilliancy. The jasper and the sardine stones were very precious, and very rare, and very beautiful to the eye of the beholder. The object of the seer is to give us a most lovely view of God, as he sat on his throne, surrounded by his worshippers.

Over this throne was a rainbow, a most significant and delightful emblem, which we shall consider in a future discourse. Spanning that throne, it spoke of hope and safety to the worshippers who bowed in adoration beneath it.

Round about the throne were "four and twenty seats," and on them sat "four and twenty elders." Of course all this is symbolical. The four and twenty elders represent, as some suppose, the smaller Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, which sat at the feet of the high priest; as others suppose, the leaders of the twenty-four orders or courses of Jewish priests—an arrangement instituted under King David; as others suppose, the whole company of redeemed ones who praise God day and night. The idea of John seems to be of a glorious company—of an exalted and honored company.

They were clothed in white, as an emblem of their purity ; they had crowns on their heads, betokening exaltation and honor.

While John thus stood and wondered, lightnings and thunders and voices proceeded out of the throne. These were merely making the whole scene more grand and awful, and adding to the infinite display of the divine attributes. "There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God." Some writers suppose that whenever these seven spirits are spoken of, they invariably refer to the Holy Ghost ; while others imagine the seven spirits to be high and exalted angels, who are the special attendants or ministers of God. The latter interpretation seems to me to accord best with the inspired original. These seven angels—a symbolic number—stand before God, ready to do his will, and waiting to obey his command. They represent the servants of the great King who says to his legions, "Go," and they depart, "Come," and they fall down at his feet.

There was a sea of glass like unto crystal before the throne. At the door of the ancient tabernacle (Exodus 38 : 8) there was a laver of brass, for the purposes of purification. All priests entering the tabernacle were to wash in this laver, the foot of which was formed of brass and of the looking glasses of the women assembling, thus

forming a mirror, that the person might see whether his purification was complete. So before the throne of God is a sea of glass, revealing each person to himself, and making his very soul transparent to his own eye. Day and night, forever, he sees his own moral image reflected from the sea of glass, with startling accuracy. Suppose a sinner, unchanged by grace, unbought with blood, unsanctified by the Spirit, could press through that open door into heaven, and urge his way, amid the four and twenty elders, up to the very throne of God! What would he do there? How would he feel? His wicked character would be reflected from the crystal pavement; his odious sins would stare him constantly in the face, and every spot and wrinkle on his wretched life would come out clear as the sunlight.

John also saw four beasts, full of eyes before and behind. The word "beast" is not the most appropriate to be used here. "A *beast* in heaven, before the throne of God, sounds *oddly*," as Adam Clarke remarks, and is an unfortunate rendering of the original. The word *creature* should be employed, as commentators with great unanimity admit. The word "beast" in this connection was first employed by Wickliffe, in his translation of the New Testament, and other translators have copied from him.

To understand the figure of the four beasts it

is necessary for us to know that the tribes of Israel were divided into four great divisions — Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan. Each of these divisions was independent in itself, in some respects ; each had national devices and symbols. The roaring lion was the emblem of Judah ; an ox, betokening great strength, was the emblem of Ephraim ; a beast with a human face was the emblem of Reuben ; an eagle, with his wings spread for flight, was the emblem of Dan. These emblems, the Jewish rabbins tell us, were selected on account of their significance, the “lion being monarch among wild beasts, the eagle among birds, the ox among cattle, and man among intelligent creatures.”*

Now, let us see how well this vision corresponds with these tribes. The first beast was a lion, the second a calf, the third had the face of a man, the fourth was a flying eagle — the very creatures which the associated tribes had adopted for their emblems. These had six wings, and were full of eyes. These six wings were for a threefold purpose. With two they cover their faces when they worship ; with two they hide their feet ; and with two they fly to do the will of God. The eyes represent the enlarged vision of the saints. They have eyes for the holy things,

* Rabbi Abin.

they have eyes for the beautiful things, they have eyes for the just things ; and with those eyes they explore all secrets and plunge into all mysteries, they scan all purposes and measure all distances.

All this glorious company John saw engaged in acts of devotion. They cast their crowns before Him who sat on the throne, and cried, "Thou art worthy to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things." Again the sovereignty of God is brought to our notice. There he sits, while the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, and all the glorified company that these represent, bow down. They not only declare that he shall have glory and honor and power, but they declare him worthy ; they say this is his due, for he creates all things for his own pleasure.

Do not our hearts burn within us while we contemplate that grand and glorious spectacle ? As we see the bright squadrons of the sky wheeling around the throne, do we not cry,—

" All hail the power of Jesus' name ;
Let angels prostrate fall ;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all " ?

As we see the Gentile nations thronging his seat

and joining with the four and twenty elders and the four beasts, do we not begin to sing again,—

“Ye Gentile sinners, ne’er forget
The wormwood and the gall ;
Go spread your trophies at his feet,
And crown him Lord of all”?

As we look in and see still beneath the altar the souls of the beheaded lying there, and waiting for retribution, do we not say to them,—

“Hail him, ye martyrs of our God,
Who from his altar call ;
Extol the stem of Jêsse’s rod,
And crown him Lord of all”?

And then, in one wild chorus from all the churches on earth, from every altar, from every communion table, from all sacred places, does there not arise the universal shout,—

“Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all”?

Christian hearers, there is a door opened in heaven. Once all was sealed, and the heavens

were as brass over our heads. No eye looked into that bright abode, no vision penetrated within the veil. But God gave us the revelation of his own dear Son, and now the blessed volume is a door opening from this dark world into the mysteries of a vast eternity. Through this door the saints can stand and gaze, as John did, into the holy dwelling-place of God ; they can behold the awful mysteries of the future, and study the secrets which for ages have been pondered by the angels.

There is a door by which *we may enter* heaven. Christ and him crucified is the door. No soul will ever enter heaven that has not been sprinkled with the blood of atonement, and been made a new creature in Christ Jesus. But, washed in blood, we may enter the pearly gates of glory, and walk the golden streets of paradise. Washed in blood, the angels will become our associates, and we shall bow with them before the throne. The four and twenty elders will rejoice to own us as their friends and associates, and will walk with us, clothed in white.

Do we see that door, or are our eyes blinded by sin ? Groping and stumbling, hundreds walk through this life, searching for the door and finding it not. They wander round and round among the dark pillars of the temple of this world, won-

dering where the gate of glory is ; and at last they reach the doors of woe, and stumble in, seeking for life, but finding death. "I," says Christ. "am the door." By him the world may enter ; without him none can approach or even gaze into the sacred enclosure.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RAINBOW ROUND THE THRONE.

And there was a rainbow round about the throne. *Revelation.*

THE Bible contains the most ancient history of our world. Its record goes back beyond the bright and palmy days of Jerusalem, beyond the pyramids which still lift their monstrous forms in the land of the Pharaohs, beyond the sweeping devastations of the flood, to the very infancy of time itself. Even the sceptic is obliged, when profane history fails him, to fall back upon the Mosaic record, which stands out with all clearness, confirming and confirmed by all the revelations of science and wisdom.

The Bible tells us when the first rainbow was seen in the heavens, and teaches us the lesson which it was designed to give. Previous to the flood we have no intimations of rain. Whether the earth was moistened by the dews of night, whether at times it was gently inundated, or whether rain fell and no mention is made of it, we cannot tell. And yet it seems to me that, had rain fallen in the early history of the world, we should have some reference to it. Rain was sent

in judgment, and the angry sky was a token of Jehovah's wrath.

The flood is supposed to have occurred in the year 1656, and B. C. 2293. We learn from the Mosaic account that God became angry with man on account of sin, and determined to destroy the whole race, except a single family. The deluge was chosen as the instrument in this destruction, and at the appointed time the fountains of the deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. The consternation of the people can be better imagined than described, as the descending rain came driving into their dwellings and sweeping away their vineyards. At first, perhaps, it fell in gentle showers, like the tears of angels, causing each place they touch to blush with beauty and smile with joy. Then faster and faster it fell, until what seemed drops of mercy were turned to waves of deep, unmingled sorrow. Soon the low lands were all covered, and creeping up the hillsides went the rising tide. The people in the valleys fled up into the mountains, and hid themselves in the caves of the earth. Soon driven from these retreats, they went higher up, or sought safety in the branches of the trees. And up came the waters, following man, step by step, to the highest peaks, and then sweeping him off into the abyss of ruin. At

length the last pinnacle of earth disappeared ; the whole was submerged, and the ark was driven on the bosom of a shoreless ocean. How dreary must that prospect have been to Noah, as he swept on over the graves of nations, over the temples and towers of sixteen hundred years, over the wreck of fortunes and the waste of life ! Not a mountain appeared in the distance to break his view ; not a green island on which he could set his foot ; not a shore running along the horizon like a bank of cloud ; not a single tree lifting its branches above the sweeping billows ; not a sign of life or animation, but all the dull rote of the sounding sea, the unbounded expanse of water stretching out, north, south, east, and west—a world without a boundary. And still the ark swept on ; now over some thick wooded forest in which the waters had silenced the howl of the savage beast ; now over cities which centuries had decorated with skill and care, and embellished with all the useful arts ; now over the palaces of kings, in which perished, in wild fear, royal families at whose thrones whole nations bowed ; now over the habitations of the poor, over graveyards, over battle fields, over temples of worship, over the prostrate forms of idols, over mines of gold, over scenes of toil, over all of good and evil, over all of life.

But a few days rolled on, and the waters began to abate. The ark rested on the summit of Mt. Ararat, and the joyful family of Noah came out and fell down in humble adoration before God. After the confinement of one hundred and fifty days they were glad to emerge from the ark, and devout and grateful emotions filled their souls. While they bowed around the altar, God appeared and conversed with Noah, informed him that his acts of piety were accepted, and his name was remembered in heaven. There, beside that humble altar on Mt. Ararat, God in condescension reasoned with his servant, and made the gracious pledge that earth should no more be destroyed by a deluge. To make that covenant remembered, God set his bow in the heavens, as an everlasting memorial of the truth of his promise ; and as he spoke, its colors came out, and there, bending over that mountain crowned with its altar and its ark, was the beautiful pledge of divine faithfulness to man. And ever since, whenever the storm, the emblem of divine wrath, has spread over the world, the bow of promise has appeared in the heavens, and has spoken eloquent words to man of the truth and veracity of God.

The conception of John is a most beautiful one. In the glimpse which he had of heaven and glory, he saw a rainbow round about the throne,

spanning it with beauties, and shedding its hues on the worshippers below. No more significant figure could represent the safety and happiness of the exalted saints. To them that bow, bending there, was a pledge of divine love, spanning the horizon of their happiness, and constantly assuring them that the deluge of sin would sweep against their ark no more. As we first read the text, we are struck with the figure, but we have to analyze it ere we see its significance. Let us study the figure more at detail, for our comfort and edification. The rainbow is a pledge that the earth shall never be deluged with water; the rainbow round about the throne is a pledge of God's protection to his people.

1. A perfect pledge. The rainbow is formed of all the primary colors, uniting and blending, through the influence of the sun, into one perfect harmony of beauties. By the laws of reflection and refraction, the rays of light from the misty atmosphere are drawn out and woven together into an arch of triumph worthy to decorate the passage of the King of kings. In that bow each shade mingles, and blends, and melts into another, until the eye is charmed and the soul is ravished with the splendor. To that arch no painter can add a single trace of beauty; it is the perfection of beautiful colors. So the rainbow of divine

promises, which spans the throne of God, is a perfect arch, in which every conceivable promise is blended. As the believer on earth and the saint in heaven goes to the throne of God, he sees over it the rainbow of divine promises, shining and glittering in beauty. There are promises for helpless infancy, for life's young morning, for the giddiness of youth, for manhood's prime, for old age, for trembling weakness, for the infirmities of a century. There are promises for health and vigor, for decline and decay, for the bed of death. There are promises for those who prosper, for those who are sad, for those who are afflicted. There are promises for the penitent sinner, for the contrite sinner, for the despairing sinner, for the hopeful sinner, for the believing sinner. There are promises for the widow, as she bends over her husband's new-made grave, and sheds on it her bitter tears ; there are promises for the mother who wraps a shroud around her babe, and places the little form in the hands of death ; there are promises for the orphan who is left unprotected and defenceless in this cold cruel world of sin. There are promises for the sailor on the mountain wave, and for the traveler delving amid the old relics of the past. There are promises for every condition in life, for every variety of earthly circumstance. They are high

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promises, broad promises, deep promises, sublime promises, eternal promises. They reach every thing. They take hold of railroads, of steamboats, of rivers and lakes, of sick beds, of all the dangers, visible and invisible, which throng our mortal life. All these promises, blended into one divine arch of glory and grace, span the mercy seat, as the believer goes to it in earnest, humble prayer. What encouragement does this afford every trembling disciple of Christ! There is a rainbow round about the throne. Blending into it are a thousand promises. If you are weak, there is a promise of strength; if you mourn, there is a promise that you shall be comforted; if you weep, there is a promise that you shall have all tears wiped from your eyes; if you have sinned, there is a promise of peace and pardon; if you are cast down and depressed, there is a promise that God will raise you up. This earth is a dreary earth, cursed by sin, an earth which bears the marks of divine displeasure. But there is a rainbow round about the throne, and it shines brightly, and is resplendent with all the promises of God.

Sometimes, after a storm, you go out and find the streets flooded with water, your vines washed up by the roots, your flowers broken to pieces, the trees just ready to break down with the accu-

mulated weight upon their leaves and branches, gorges cut in the hillsides, your paths all washed and disordered, and the whole in confusion. Just then sad thoughts fill your mind ; you murmur ; your countenance becomes troubled ; and your soul, like the scene before you, wears an aspect of gloom. But you look up, and over against the sun, resting on the sky, is God's bow set in the clouds. It speaks to you of the morrow ; it is a promise that your desolated garden shall smile again, and that the very storm that ravaged it will be a blessing to it. The murmur dies upon your lips ; better thoughts come thronging your mind ; a smile covers your countenance, and the frown disappears, and you call your children round you to look up and bless the bright, beautiful arch on which is written, "The Lord is a sun and a shield ; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

So this earth, like your garden, has been desolated by sin. The traces of its former beauty are gone. Seas of sorrows roll here, supplied by streams of tears. There are graves and tombs ; there are fierce foes, and relentless enemies, and false friends. If we look about us at the broken vines of virtue and truth, at the gorges cut in the mountains of friendship, at the sepulchre of beauty and life, we shall be sad indeed. Mourn

ful murmurs will escape us, and we shall walk through life bowed and broken-hearted. But look up. There is a rainbow round about the throne. It spans the whole footstool of mercy, and sends down its hallowed light to tell of comfort and hope to man. It is a perfect pledge of God's boundless, eternal love to his creatures.

2. A beautiful pledge. We thank God that he gave to the world such a beautiful sign of his grace. If, as a pledge that no other deluge should ever come upon the earth, he had set a black, frowning cloud, or a bright, flashing pillar of fire, it would have been a great act of mercy. But there would have been but little beauty in the cloud or the fire. We should have turned away from them at a moment's glance. But God, as if to win our attention and fix our gaze on this evidence of his goodness, combined all the colors, and blended them into one beautiful arch, which rests upon the dark, frowning sky with a most charming contrast. The eye never tires in gazing at it. When it appears in the heavens, old men and maidens, the grave and the gay, come out to see it, and patiently they watch it until its last beams have faded entirely away. So the bow of divine promises which spans the mercy seat combines the highest order of beauty with the greatest grace. When God wished to prom

ise protection to the woman who had lost a husband and the child who had lost a father, he said, "I will be a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless." When he wished to promise guidance to the child deserted by earthly relatives, he put it into the heart of a good man to say, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." When he wished to invite the wandering children of earth to his feet, he exclaims, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." "Come," he says, "let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." With the greatest degree of perfection these promises combine great beauty and significancy, and, like the rainbow, they draw our attention, they fix our thoughts, they win our admiration, and enlist all our souls.

3. A pledge of safety and security. An arch is often used as an emblem of strength. We find in the ancient cities that the arches were more enduring than almost any other class of monuments. In Rome, the arch of Titus, the arch of Constantine, and many others, yet stand in won

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derful perfection, while the temples, the pillars, and the palaces of that era have been shaken down by the hand of time. When, therefore, God was about to give a sign to men, he selected the arch, which, spanning the world, gives us an idea of solidity and firmness. With all its light, lively colors, the rainbow, whenever seen, is an emblem of security. It rests on the mountains, and looks as if it never could be removed. And so with the rainbow of promises which bends over the mercy seat in heaven. Based on the mountains of divine goodness, and rising to a glorious height, it teaches the inviolability of the word of God. The word of man often fails, but the word of God does not. Not one of the promises to the widow and the fatherless, to the weeping and the sad, to the penitent and believing, will ever be disappointed. Whoever relies on God will never be moved. As the mountains were round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about them that fear him. As the world has no fear of another deluge to sweep away its inhabitants, or another flood to drown the nations, so the believer has no reason to fear that the bow over the throne will fail, or the promises which are gathered into it will remain unfulfilled.

4. A perpetual pledge, a universal pledge. The rainbow has no end. It rises in one ocean and

sets in another. It is not an immense pyramid of light, shooting up into glory, nor a long horizontal stream of light, flaming through the clouds, but an arch, spanning the world, and taking us all into its circle. It is a beautiful emblem of eternity, which is without beginning and without end. Thus to the believer the rainbow round the throne speaks to him the endlessness of the promises of God. The rainbow covers all who place themselves beneath it, and its promises are alike to all. They are not transient, but they stand through endless years.

There was a rainbow round about the throne! This John saw when in exile he obtained a delightful view of heaven. There was a throne, and a very terrible one. Voices and lightnings and thunderings proceeded out of it, and it was very awful to gaze upon. But over it was a rainbow; and when John saw that, he was not afraid to approach the place, and stand with the four and twenty elders before God. And if we ever obtain a view of heaven, if by faith we ever see, through the door opened in heaven, the great temple of eternity, we shall see the throne, spanned by the arch of promise, and hung with the emblems of beauty, safety, perfection, and eternity.

And there cometh on the world another flood

—not of water, for God's bow has been set in the heavens as a surety against that—but a flood of tribulation, to destroy them that fear not God. O, compared with that the deluge which swept the antediluvian world away will be as nothing. But now, as then, an ark will ride on the flood—Christ that ark. All who are in him will survive the general wreck, outsail the storm, outride the deluge, and land at last on Ararat; and as they build an eternal altar to the glory of God and the praise of divine grace, they will lift their eyes and behold a rainbow around the throne, with colors far more vivid than were mingled in that which Noah saw spanning the heights of the mountain on which his ark rested. And, alas! where then will the wicked be? Where will be the innumerable company that love not God, and obey not his Son? As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the end of the world. "Swept away" will be the history of the throngs who refuse to yield to Christ and enter the ark of safety. Who can describe the sorrow of the people who, when the flood came, went to the ark and found the door shut, and they barred out? And who can describe the sorrows of those who, in the last day, find the door of mercy closed against them? Look up, and behold the rainbow round about the throne!

CHAPTER XV.

THE MERCY SEAT.

The mercy seat. *Chronicles.*

IN all their wanderings through the wilderness, the children of Israel carried with them an ark, which, after all their travels, found rest with them in the temple at Jerusalem. This ark was a small box, three feet and nine inches long by two feet and three inches wide. It was made of a very fragrant wood, well put together, and covered over with plates of gold. On each side of the ark were two rings of gold, through which ornamented poles were passed, for the greater convenience of carrying the sacred treasure from place to place. In this ark were the tables of the law written by God, and given to Moses on the mount; a golden pot containing three quarts of manna, which had been gathered in the wilderness and miraculously preserved; Aaron's rod, which budded and sent forth its miraculous fruit; and one or two other articles, sacred to the Israelites. This ark had a cover, or lid, like the lid of a chest; and on each end of this cover was an angel—a cherub of gold—with his wings

upraised, hovering over the ark. This lid was the mercy seat, on which God was supposed to sit in an especial manner to hear the wants of his people. Over this lid or mercy seat hovered the shekinah, a mysterious cloud, which was supposed to conceal the awful form of Deity from the gaze of the bending worshippers. This cloud descended from heaven and took its place over the ark when that was first made, and, remaining with it, went into the temple on the day of the dedication. When the people wanted any favor, they came from their employments and pleasures to bow before the ark, and to beseech God to hear and answer them. There, at that mercy seat, the weary heart was lightened of its load of sin and shame; there the wounded soul was comforted and blessed; there the desponding was inspired with an immortal hope; and there grace, in its sweetest, divinest form, was imparted to the saints.

The ark of the covenant is gone. The Jews suppose it to be still in existence. Beneath the mosque of Omar, on Mount Zion, where once stood the temple, are said to be deep caves and long chambers filled with articles once used in the Jewish service. Superstition and tradition prevent the exploration of those long subterranean galleries and chambers by any Mohammedan,

and Christian feet are not allowed within the gate. The tradition of the Jews is, that when the temple was sacked, on various occasions, the priests fled with the gold and silver vessels to these underground halls prepared for the purpose, and, having deposited and locked them in, left them in the miraculous care of God, to be exhumed and used by future generations. That the ark will be found, the Jews confidently believe, notwithstanding all the various accounts of its destruction.

But though the ark of God is gone, the mercy seat remains ; not that mercy seat overlaid with gold, and guarded by winged cherubs, but a mercy seat on which sits the King of kings and the Lord of lords ; and to that mercy seat I wish to call your attention.

1. God sits upon it. However God represents himself at times as a severe being, hating sin, and taking vengeance on transgressors, you find that he nowhere forgets his mercy or abandons his grace. He represents himself as a father waiting to hear the voices of his children, with his hands full of blessings to supply their wants. So can we look up to God. There he sits, upon a throne of grace, upon the mercy seat, attentive to all the petitions which are presented. When the Christian sees God upon the throne of creation,

flashing the lightnings athwart the world, and rolling his thunders round the globe, he trembles, and is afraid. Like Moses before the burning bush, he puts the shoes from off his feet, and like Israel at the base of Sinai, he yields himself to terrible fears. When he sees God controlling the storm, bringing forth the harvest, spreading sunlight over the face of merry creation, his fear departs, and admiration takes its place. He looks into the face of God with wonder and delight. But when he sees him upon the mercy seat, he has still more exalted conceptions of his majesty. He loves him then with all his heart; his fear, his admiration, merge themselves in one deep, all-pervading gush of affection for a being who in the midst of the countless affairs and the intricate workings of his government, finds time to commune with the creatures of earth, and speak to them in the lute notes of mercy. O, were it not for this, man might well despair of ever finding peace or rest any where! But when he approaches the volume of inspiration, and gazes down with his tearful eyes into its sacred truths, he finds there the mercy seat revealed, and his griefs disappear at once. With eyes filled now with tears of joy, he cries,—

“A throne of grace! then let us go
And offer up our prayer ;

A gracious God will mercy show
To all that worship there."

This fact is well calculated to inspire all who pray, with the most delicious confidence. God is there! Though the waves of sin may be swelling around us, though the heavens may be black over our heads, though awful voices may be heard, appalling us, yet God is there! The universe may be in confusion, angels may be in rebellion, the courses of nature may all be stopped, but God is there! Never for a single moment does he leave that mercy seat, that throne of grace.

"A throne of grace: rejoice, ye saints;
That throne is open still;
To God unbosom your complaints,
And there inquire his will."

2. Christ is the medium of approach to the mercy seat. That throne of grace is the old judgment seat on which God sat when he pronounced the sentence of everlasting banishment from heaven upon the angels who kept not their first estate. Once it was the throne whence God denounced vengeance upon his foes; the angels approached it with awe and trembling; and flashing fires burned around it continually. It was the throne of judgment, and terrors wrapped it round.

“ Once ’twas a seat of dreadful wrath,
And shot devouring flame ;
Our God was then consuming fire,
And vengeance was his name.”

But Christ gave himself a sacrifice to appease the wrath of offended Deity ; his blood shed for the remission of sins fell on that awful throne. The fires went out, and the dreadful voice of wrath was hushed. Mercy spread a mantle of light over the seat of justice, and henceforth the throne of judgment was the throne of grace. Beside that throne Christ stands, day and night, forever, to introduce the believer who comes in his own name to the everlasting Father. As the Christian kneels there, engaged in deep, earnest, spiritual devotion, he feels the hand of Christ drawing him nearer to the awful God. He shrinks back instinctively, conscious of his own unworthiness to go near to him in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and before whom the angels are impure. But Christ draws him gently forward, until he is before the throne. As the maiden blind from her birth is led along through ranks of noble lords and courtly dames, to the very feet of the king of whom she wishes a favor, unconscious as she goes of her nearness to the royal presence, yet confident in the hand that leads her, insensible

to the wealth and beauty which dazzle others, so the child of God is led amid troops of angels, by the seats of cherubim and seraphim, near and nearer to the God he loves, until he feels the breath of Deity exhaled gently as the air of heaven upon his closed eyes and his aching heart, and he knows, as he falls down in the luxury of prayer, that God has received him. Through Christ, and him crucified, there is access to God, to the throne of grace. Whoever should think of going to the mercy seat without Christ would never reach it. That angel escort would beat him back; those cherub legions would stretch their ranks all around the place, and none could approach it. The reason why we are not heard when we pray is because we do not come in the name of Christ. We do not put our hand in his, and submit to be led, like the blind maiden, to the feet of the great King, there to stand while Christ speaks for us and places his merits to our account. We intrude ourselves upon the notice and into the presence of God, with no one to introduce us to his awful majesty; and no wonder that the mercy seat yields us no relief to our sorrows! Whoever comes to God must come through Christ; he must have a mysterious connection with that blood shed on Calvary; he must be united with Christ in the bonds of a living, exalted faith.

3. The mercy seat is accessible to ALL. The interviews with monarchs are usually granted to great, honored, or learned men. The poor stand in crowds around the palace gate, to catch a glimpse of the sovereign, as he passes or repasses. But interviews with God may be had by all. There is no one so poor that he may not be presented at the court of heaven. He needs no costly dress in which to come; the robe of a Redeemer's righteousness alone will cover him. He must pay no money to the guard; angels scorn the gift. They will not hesitate to admit him, though his name may never have been known to the noble of the earth, though his dress may be patched and ragged, though his body may be scarred with wounds, though he may be dishonored and disgraced among men. God will receive him with as much honor as if he were a king, just stepped from his throne, or a queen, with all her robes of grace and beauty on. The seat on which God sits is not a throne of state, which must be maintained, and which would be tarnished by the approach of beggars, but it is a throne of grace, a mercy seat. The wretched, too, may come. Whoever hath a want or a wound, a woe or a sorrow to be alleviated or healed, whoever has been deserted by friends, persecuted by enemies, deceived by the world, and cast down by cruel wrong, may come. The

sinner may come—the vile and wretched criminal, who has disgraced himself, his kindred, and his country. All covered over with sins, he may approach the throne and be accepted. Could we tear aside the veil which hides the mercy seat from men, we should behold kneeling there all conditions and ranks in life, all joyfully received. The learned man would be seen bowing there. Before that throne, “his senses take a quicker life, and become one refined and exquisite emotion.”

“ His spirit is entranced
With joy exalted to beatitude.”

By his side, at the same mercy seat, kneels a man who cannot write his own name, but who can read the name of Christ in his own living experience. Unutterable wisdom streams down upon his soul while there bowing before God. There is the rich man. He has come from his home of luxury, to enjoy the luxury of prayer. By his side is a slave in chains; but as he prays, his free spirit soars above his fetters. The Hindoo is there, and the polished European; the Tartar and the Hottentot, the polished and the rude speaking all languages, but all understood and all accepted. God smiles, Christ rejoices, angels shout, while men of all nations come, and the

“Dialects unheard at Babel or at Jewish Pentecost
Now first articulate divinest sounds,
And swell the universal anthem.”

O, yes ; if you and I, sinners as we are, wish to see God, and hear his voice, we shall find him on the mercy seat ; pronouncing the name of Christ, we shall be accepted, and, notwithstanding our unworthiness, our wishes will be met.

4. An approach to the mercy seat is one of the most *simple* yet sublime acts of religious devotion. How awfully sublime the spectacle of a human being approaching the throne of grace, to pour his woes and wants, not into an angel's ears, but into the listening ear of God himself ! It must be a source of wonder to the cherubic hosts, as, from their dazzling stations, they behold the Jehovah of eternity giving audience to a poor, wounded child of earth, listening to the story of his wrongs, and stooping down from his infinite height to pour solace and salvation into that afflicted spirit. Where is sublimity, if not here ? Where is grandeur, if not in such a scene ? The marching pageantry of nations and all the sublimity of earth equal not the scene where God gives audience to man.

But the simplicity of prayer equals its sublimity. Who cannot pray ? Who so poor, so igno-

rant, so wretched, so guilty, that he cannot pour out his soul to God, in earnest supplication? From the Son of God down to the poorest wretch that ever crept on earth, there is nothing so simple yet so sublime as prayer. Our Savior, when he was on earth, gave us a model for a prayer, and it constitutes a gem of thought as pure and precious as ever breathed from the lips of infinite wisdom. It combines in their highest forms the sublimity of heaven with the touching dependence of earth. Henry Ward Beecher, in an eloquent paragraph now floating on the bosom of the public press, says of this petition,—

“It is the universal prayer. Besides its simplicity, its depth, its comprehensiveness, its majesty, there have gathered about this transparent model extensive interests. For now near two thousand years it has been the prayer of all Christians. It was spoken by Christ. It was remembered and used by the apostles. Their disciples adopted it. It became a universal prayer. It has lived both in the pure and the corrupt church. While the learned and cultured felt its significance, and breathed it forth as a part of their daily devotion, the poorest laborers, the most ignorant Christian servants, were also touched by it, and comforted. It was embedded into the conglomerate liturgies of the church ;

and while in magnificent cities, and from the recesses of grand cathedrals, it was uttered by gorgeous priests, amidst the smoke of incense, and chanting choirs, it still retained its simplicity, its depth, its spirituality. This sweet prayer lay amidst the Romish ritual like some little lake amidst mountains, piled up about it, overgrown with rank luxuriance, and full of the pomp of the seasons, while the lake lay tranquilly reflecting heaven in its bosom."

So of all true prayer ; its language, the natural outgush of its spirit, is true and unadorned simplicity. The most learned men, the most eloquent orators, when they pray, bend to one simple strain of holy fervor. The eloquent prayers which some men offer, in which they bring forward the flowers of rhetoric, to charm, if possible, the ear of God, are an abomination to him. He loves a simple heart better than the most eloquent oration. You have heard of a woman who was commended for giving two mites into the treasury of the Lord, while rich men, who gave of their abundance, were not commended ; so the widow's prayer sometimes rises to heaven, and finds admittance to the ear of God, while the prayer of the learned man dies emptily on the wind. O, 'tis an awful thing to pray ! The man who approaches the mercy seat with a thought-

less heart makes himself an intolerable offence to God. *He loveth the humble, and the proud he knoweth afar off.* He will not hear the plea of a man who comes to him wrapped up in self-righteousness and sin. He will send him away without his requests, and will leave him destitute of his blessings.

5. The mercy seat is the appointed place where the blessing of heaven is to be obtained. We greatly misapprehend the relations of the mercy seat to us. We greatly undervalue the privilege of prayer. God has ordained prayer as the medium through which many of our blessings are to be received ; and I know of no condition in life where a man may not present his wants to God. If a Christian has notes to be met, if he has obligations to perform, if he has plans to be carried into execution, God, who watches over the temporal as well as the spiritual interests of his people, will listen to the prayer he chooses to offer. In our hurrying, driving world, business and prayer are too far separated from each other. The man of business has religion in his closet, in his family, in the church, but does not think of making the matters of his counting house and workshop subjects of earnest prayer to God.

We should pray more. The blessings we need do not descend upon us because the holy stream

of earnest pleading does not ascend to heaven from our lips and hearts. The preaching of the gospel is almost powerless, because Christians do not follow it with earnest supplications. There is but little prayer in the church for the truth. Men come to the sanctuary, and if they are pleased with the sermon are well satisfied. While it is being preached, they do not sit sending up strong prayers to heaven for the descent of the all-powerful Spirit. Once a minister resigned his office as pastor of his church. His people gathered about him in surprise and grief, and asked the reason for such sudden action. "Why," said he, "my ministry is unblessed; and the reason is, I have lost my prayer book." "Prayer book!" they repeated, in surprise; "we never knew you used a prayer book." "Yes," said he, "I once had a praying church; that was my prayer book; and the church has ceased to pray, and I have lost the holy influence." How many ministers in the same sense have lost their prayer book!

"Please, ma'am, who is the preacher for to-morrow?" asked a poor but pious young girl. "Mr. E.," replied the good lady to whom the question was put; "but, K., why do you wish to know?" (It had been the girl's constant practice to come on Saturday to ask the lady this

same question.) K. blushed, and modestly replied, "I always like to know who the preacher is, that I may tell better how to pray for him."

The venerable Samuel Pearce, of Birmingham, used to pass through his vestry on Sabbath morning, by a rear passage, to his pulpit. A prayer meeting was held before the service; "and," said that holy man, "I always caught the keynote of the day, as I paused awhile to listen to the fervent prayers which were ascending for the success of the truth."

Dear hearer, do you know how to pray? It is an art divine. Many a man who can make an eloquent oration, who can speak fluently on many topics in life, cannot pray. To pray right, a man must love God and believe on Christ. Love is an essential element in prayer.

"He prayeth well who loveth well
All things, both great and small;
He prayeth best who loveth best
Both man, and bird, and beast;
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

Do you pray?—in your closet, that sweetest place of all? in your family, where the outward influence is most to be sought? in the social meeting, where others unite? in the house of

God, while another leads ? If you do not pray, you deprive yourself of one of the greatest luxuries of the Christian life ; you shut against yourself one of the golden gates of hope ; you quench over your own head one of the stars of faith ; you blot one of the most precious promises from the book of life.

“ ’Tis sweet to be allowed to pray
To God, the holy one.”

But if there be no love, there can be no prayer. There would be no joy, no worship in heaven, if love did not prevail.

“ All tuneless is the quivering string ;
No melody can Gabriel bring ;
Mute are its arches, when, above,
The harps of heaven wake not to love.”

Love inspires our prayers—love going up to God, love spreading out its arms to embrace a dying world.

THE END.

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